

COMMENTS ON THE DAILY READINGS

February 1

Exodus 5

This chapter records the first visit of Moses to Pharaoh. The children of Israel awaited the outcome with excited expectation of immediate deliverance. Knowing that Yahweh had promised to help them, they expected their deliverance to be swift and easy. But, as Moses had been warned, the reverse proved to be the case. Instead of relief from their burdens they found them increased. Accusing them of idleness, Pharaoh ordered that they now gather the straw as well as make the bricks. In disappointment they turned on Moses and blamed him as the cause of their increasing problems. In turn, he took the complaint to Yahweh in prayer. There is an important lesson in this. Deliverance depends on the manifestation of faith based on right doctrine. The nation had neither in any quantity at this stage. A process of development was required, and during that period their genuineness would be tested. We often see this when folk from outside the believing community go through a period of challenges as they must leave behind old beliefs and behaviours. The world (Pharaoh) does not release its slaves without a fight (Rom. 6:16-18).

V.1-2 – “Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness” – This demand was made of the reigning Pharaoh, evidently Merneptah (son and successor of Ramases II), a weak and self-opinionated prince. His reaction to Moses’ demand was in accord with his character as indicated in historical records. The contest becomes a religious one. Yahweh had commanded His people to hold a feast to worship and acknowledge His authority; and Pharaoh, who was a god in the Egyptians’ eyes, refused – “Who is Yahweh, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go.” **Seven** times this demand is made by Moses during the fruitless negotiations (Ex. 5:1; 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3 = **covenant**). It was a question of covenant, for Yahweh had promised Abraham that his seed would come out of Egypt after 400 years of affliction (215 of them in Egypt) – Gen. 15:13-16.

V.3-5 - “let us go, we pray thee, **three days’** journey into the desert, and **sacrifice** unto Yahweh our God” – Everyone who wants to be involved in the benefits of the promises made to Abraham has to be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:16,26-29). In so doing, we enter figuratively into his death and resurrection. In a figure, we crucify the flesh (sacrifice it as he did) by giving up on the “old man” and becoming a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). The parable of Israel’s exodus from Egypt set that pattern. Three days presages Christ’s time in the article of death by sacrifice. We must follow that pattern in order to enter upon the wilderness journey to the Land of Promise.

Pharaoh demanded a return to work for **his** interests (the ‘Pharaohs’ of this world have ever since repeated his demand). He reasoned, “Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.” His slaves had increased greatly in number (as is true of our time), and must be kept busy and distracted lest they seek release from his slavery. The modern world has done well in providing much for us to do, and as for distractions, there has never been more.

V.6-14 – Pharaoh commanded his taskmasters to increase the burdens on Israel, lest they “regard vain words” (the way the world views the truth) – “Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves” – Forced to scramble around the land to gather stubble instead of straw which the Egyptians had previously supplied, the Hebrews could not produce the daily quota of clay bricks to build Pharaoh’s cities, temples and pyramids. The consequences were harsh – “the officers of the

children of Israel...were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?"

V.15-23 – "Then the officers of the children of Israel came and **cried unto Pharaoh**, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?" – Israel's leaders made a mistake. They should have cried unto Yahweh first, or at the very least gone to Moses for advice. They assumed the edict concerning straw came from the taskmasters themselves ("the fault is in thine own people"), and not from the top, and that they had fabricated this edict by saying, "Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw" (V.10). They should have known better. Did they expect 'king sin' to criticise his agents of cruelty in favour of mere slaves? The flaw in their thinking lay in their choice of masters – "Why do you treat **your servants** like this?" They should have seen themselves as Yahweh's servants, not Pharaoh's. This is the key to redemption and release from slavery – a change of masters.

Pharaoh's response was that they were spending too much time on religion and were therefore lazy when it came to his interests – (LITV) "You are lazy, lazy! That's why you're saying, Let's go offer sacrifices to Yahweh." They realized immediately that their situation had got a whole lot worse – "the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task," so they confronted Moses and Aaron and charged them with conspiracy. In frustration, "Moses returned unto Yahweh" and queried the purpose of his mission. Release from slavery to sin and death can be an uncomfortable process. The essential quality is humility and abandonment of any sense that we can save ourselves. It is the quality of being "poor in spirit," and it means a crushing of the human spirit. It is placed first by Christ in the 8 necessary characteristics required for salvation (Matt. 5:3).

Exodus 6

V.1 – "Then Yahweh said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land" – God's response to the plaintive cry of Moses was to restate what he had been told previously (Ex. 3:19-20). God had indicated it would not be an easy task – "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand." Under pressure and burdened with disappointment and frustration, we can forget the promises made. The title 'Pharaoh' claimed divine power for Egypt's king. It signifies 'The gift of the Ra,' rendered by some as 'The Servant of the Sun,' or, 'The Child of the Sun.' Ra was the sun god of Egypt. It was against this pagan claim of divinity that Yahweh's judgements would fall. But it was also time to revisit the promises made to Abraham.

V.2-9 – (Brenton's English Septuagint for V.2-3) "I am the Lord (Yahweh). And I appeared to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, being their God (El Shaddai), but I did not **manifest** to them my name Lord" (Yahweh). It is quite clear from the Genesis record that the Patriarchs knew God by the name Yahweh, as it is put in their mouths frequently; e.g. Gen. 12:8; 13:4 – Abram "called upon the name of Yahweh" (not possible if it is not known); in the mouth of Sarai in Gen. 16:2,5 – "Yahweh judge between me and thee"; Abraham addressed Michael as "Yahweh" in Gen. 18:3 (see Appendix 32, The Companion Bible); Abraham instructed his servant in Gen. 24:3 – "I will make thee swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven"; and the servant of Abraham in Gen. 24:27 – "Blessed be Yahweh God of my master Abraham"; etc. God is saying here that while the Patriarchs knew His name, they did not know its **meaning and purpose** which was revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14-15). The reason for that was explained in the comments on Ex. 3 on January 31 – Yahweh's surname spells out the process of redemption through the Abrahamic promises. A father (Yahweh, represented by Abraham – Gen. 17:5), working through a beloved son (Christ, represented by Isaac – Gen.

22:2), would develop a family (Spiritual Israel, represented by Jacob the type of all the redeemed). From Gen. 17:1 onwards, God had operated as a builder and nourisher of His family, known as **El Shaddai** (Gen. 49:25), and had waited until Israel had become a numerous family locked up in slavery in Egypt before revealing the **meaning** of His name which enshrined His purpose. A little thought reveals that God had both Jew and Gentile in mind because the promises made to Abraham were that “in thy seed shall **all the nations** of the earth be blessed,” hence, when Israel left Egypt they came out as a mixed multitude (Ex. 12:38 – “a mixed multitude went up also with them”). God is still calling “the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name” (Acts 15:14).

3 other O.T. passages have the identical form and construction in Hebrew to Ex. 6:3. The emphasised conjunction “and” is very strong and the grammar of the whole sentence is interrogative with both parts being rhetorical questions linked and contrasted by the “and.” Examples of the same grammatical structure follow: Ex. 8:26 – “...lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians? and will they not stone us?” Job 2:10 – “What, shall we receive good at the hand of Yahweh? and shall we not receive evil?” Jonah 4:10 – “Hast thou had pity on the gourd? and should not I spare Nineveh?” Hence, Ex. 6:3 may be translated: “Did not I appear unto Abraham... by El Shaddai? and by my name Yahweh was I not known unto them?” He was, but the meaning of His name was withheld.

The message Moses was to take back to Israel provided hope and assurance – “I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgements,” and “I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am Yahweh,” but the Hebrews were so crushed under their burdens and the oppression of their taskmasters that they were not ready to listen – “but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.”

V.10-13 – Dispirited by Israel’s dismissal of Yahweh’s message, Moses queried why Pharaoh would listen to him. Things had reached a low ebb, so God gave both Moses and Aaron “a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.” With mutual support they could reignite the desire of their people to leave Egypt.

V.14-27 – What follows is a genealogy of sorts and is clearly intended to emphasize that Israel’s greatest prophet (apart from Christ), Moses, came from humble and difficult circumstances (that is the way God works). ‘Higher’ critics have challenged this record from various angles and this is dealt with extensively in the Exodus Expositor, pages 101-105 for those interested.

V.28-30 – Bowed down under the weight of disappointment and a sense of hopelessness, Moses claimed again an inability to deal with the volatile Pharaoh – “Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” Some think he had a speech impediment, but many will understand that when hopelessness rules in our lives, all natural abilities fail. Yahweh recommissioned him nevertheless – “I am Yahweh (“He who will

The Divine Surname

Ex. 3:14-15 (Heb. 11:16)

“Yahweh Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of

ABRAHAM) The Father

...ISAAC) The Son

...JACOB) Multitudinous Seed

....this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

(This surname occurs 12 times in Scripture)

become"): speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee." How much we depend on the promise inherent in that name! God's "strength is made perfect in weakness."

Psalm 58 – A prayer for God to judge the wicked

V.1-2 – "To the chief Musician, Altaschith (see comment January 31), **Michtam of David**. Do ye indeed **speak righteousness**, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?" – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 57. This psalm has the same subscription (found in the superscription of Ps. 59). It means "destroy not." The background to this psalm is suggested by the phrase "speak righteousness" in V.1 which is only found in Ps. 52, a psalm about Doeg the Edomite. This teaching psalm (Michtam) of David could be applied to many situations in David's life where men like Doeg were encountered, but David's challenge in V.1 seems to be based on the scene in Ramah when Doeg reported David's visit to Nob where he and his men were fed with the old shewbread. Saul in his twisted narcissistic self-pity appealed to "all his servants (who) were standing about him," and harangued them saying, "all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me." No-one spoke up to defend David or Jonathan when they all knew Saul's claims of conspiracy were nonsense. Where were the defenders of truth and justice? Rotherham's translation is even more damning – "Are ye, indeed, silent when righteousness, ye should speak? When, with equity, ye should judge, O ye sons of men?" They were all too frightened of losing their place in Saul's court, and the gifts he had bestowed as bribes to buy their loyalty. None were prepared to "speak righteousness." Upholding right and Divine justice (not man's Humanistic 'justice') is the first requirement of God's servants – "what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to **do justly**, and to **love mercy**, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Men like Saul and Doeg feign religion while secretly "in heart...work wickedness;" and "weigh the violence" they intend to commit (consider Doeg at Nob contemplating the way he could use what he saw for his own advancement). This is because they have not become anything different from the way they were born – "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (V.3).

The psalm can be summarised as follows: V.1-2 – The hypocrisy of the wicked exposed; V.3-5 – The wicked as the serpent's seed; V.6-9 – A plea for the complete destruction of the wicked; V.10-11 – The righteous rejoice when God judges the wicked.

V.3-5 – (ESV) "They have venom like the venom of a serpent, like the **deaf** adder that stops its ear, so that it does not hear the voice of charmers or of the cunning enchanter" – Herein lay the problem – failure to hear. That failure is due to remaining in the amoral state in which they were born (see John 8:44; Rom. 8:4-8; Gal. 5:16-17). It is only when men abandon their natural thinking and adopt God's thinking that they see clearly and judge rightly. Saul was a classic Judaiser and Doeg a 'worshipper' of Yahweh, but both were ruled by their serpent nature.

V.6-11 – David's imprecation of judgement on the wicked speaks for itself, and culminates in an outburst of confidence in God – "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance....So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Psalm 59 – The God of mercy is my strength and defence

V.1 – “To the chief Musician, Altaschith, **Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.** Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 58. This psalm is identified as being written early in David’s life when “Saul also sent messengers unto David’s house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning” (1 Sam. 19:11), but Michal (Saul’s daughter) whom he had recently married after Saul had used her hand in marriage as a plot to have David killed by the Philistines, “let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.” Saul had thrown a javelin at David in the court the previous night, so the writing was on the wall, hence David’s cry – “Rescue me from my foes, O my God.”

The structure of the psalm is governed by two pause marks (“Selah”) in V.5 and V.13 which introduce negative refrains, but there are also two positive refrains in V.9-10 and V.17 – “Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy” which constitute the central theme. The content is: V.1-5 – David’s prayer for deliverance from his enemies; V.6-7 – David likens his enemies to wild dogs; V. 8-10 – David’s confidence of deliverance and punishment of his enemies; V.14-15 – David again likens his enemies to dogs; V.16-17 – David’s final and joyful confidence of deliverance.

The psalm largely speaks for itself, but there is a very interesting statement made in V.13 with a far-reaching prophecy of the rule of Christ on earth – “Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that **God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.**” This is essentially what Gabriel told Mary in Luke 1:33 – “And he shall reign over the house of **Jacob** for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end” (as explained on March 10 and September 9 as follows) – Luke 1:33 – “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and **of his kingdom there shall be no end.**” This is not a reference to time, as Christ’s Kingdom only lasts for 1,000 years (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 20:4,6). It is an allusion to Isa. 9:7 – “**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end**, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” How will Christ ‘increase’ government and peace? Only by conquering one nation after another over 40 years until he fully establishes the Kingdom. When he has complete control of all nations, then there will be no end to his Kingdom. Wherever you go then, you will be in Christ’s Kingdom. Accordingly, he will rule “in Jacob unto the ends of the earth.”

Romans 10 – The salvation of Gentiles by faith

V.1-4 – The Apostle prayed for his kinsmen whom he knew were like he had once been. They had “a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” and set about to “establish their own righteousness” and did not submit “themselves unto the righteousness of God.” As Paul had shown conclusively in his epistle thus far, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

V.5-21 – The citation is from Lev. 18:5 – “describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Obedience to the Law did indeed bring many benefits, but no man could keep it perfectly, and if you broke one commandment the rest of the Law fell upon you (James 2:10). It was a great “schoolmaster” (Gal. 3:24), and “holy, just and good,” but it could not deliver eternal life (Rom. 8:3). It was designed to bring those living under it to Christ, and he was as near as the mouth and pen of the Apostle who was directing their attention to the Word of God (V.8). Paul’s selective citation of Deut. 30:11-14 makes the point that all the strivings of Jews “going about to establish their

own righteousness" (V.3) was wasted energy, for "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of **faith**, which we preach," and that Word produces faith (V.17). Believing in the heart leads to confession with the mouth, and that ultimately leads to salvation after the Patriarchal pattern (Heb. 11:13). However, the citation of Isa. 28:16 in V.11 is a subtle warning of the danger of sticking with Judaism. Jew and Gentile have equal access to salvation on the basis of faith. All they need is a teacher, and the Apostle was in the vanguard of those whose "sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

Paul uses three citations in V.19-21 to demonstrate that God always intended to call the Gentiles on the basis of faith and that it would provoke jealousy in His people Israel. The first citation is from Deut. 32:21 – "I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish **nation** I will anger you." Next he cites Isa. 65:1a expecting Jews would know the balance of the verse – "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a **nation** that was not called by my name." Finally, he cites Isa. 65:2 about God's own "rebellious people" (i.e. Judaistic people). The "nation" here is the true ecclesia which from the time of Isaiah right down to Christ's second advent would largely consist of Gentiles. It is the "nation" Christ said would inherit God's vineyard (Matt. 21:43), and the "nation" of Isa. 55:5 who would inherit the "sure mercies of David" (Isa. 55:3).

Romans 11 – God has not forsaken His people Israel

V.1-10 – Paul hastens to add that God had not totally "cast away His people" for Paul was himself a Jew, and there were quite a few others who had converted to Christ. Even Elijah's earnest intercession for God to destroy Israel was rejected because there was then, as there was in Paul's time a remnant saved by grace because of their faith, and not Judaistic works like those who were asleep, blind and deaf (V.7 is cited from Isa. 29:10), and whose ritualism was a snare (V.9-10 cited from Ps. 69:22-23).

V.11-24 – Paul returned to the theme of jealousy. The imagery of the olive tree is used of the failure of Israel and the grafting in of the Gentiles. Israel is the "good olive tree," the Divinely provided "stock of Jesse" (Isa. 11:1), and its natural "branches were broken off" due to lack of faith, and their apostasy. In the hope of saving a remnant of His people, the Gospel went to the Gentiles (the "wild olive tree") "to provoke them (the Jews) to jealousy." Having been grafted into the olive tree of Israel, converted Gentiles "only stand through your faith" (ESV). "Behold therefore **the goodness and severity of God**: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, **if** thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again." Ultimately, this will be the case (V.25-27) fulfilling Isa. 59:20-21.

V.28-36 – God's covenants will be fulfilled despite the waywardness of His people. Gentile converts were once in the position of Israel now – blind, and should be thankful that the falling away of Israel allowed the Gospel to be preached to the Gentiles. Jew and Gentile were at one time "locked up all in the prison of unbelief" (Weymouth V.32). Paul launches into unrestrained praise of Yahweh for "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" In the process he hits upon the formula for salvation – "For **of** (ek – out of) Him, and **through** (dia – the channel of) Him, and **to** (the purpose of) Him, are all things." We are called by God's grace to manifest His glory (like Israel – Jer. 13:11) and He is the channel (the means) of achieving it through the development of faith and character by the power of His Word (V.17) – "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

February 2

Exodus 7 – The first plague – water into blood

V.1-2 – “See, I have made thee a god (*elohim*) to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” (i.e. spokesman – V.2) – The partnership of Moses and Aaron fortified them for the task ahead in dealing with the irascible Pharaoh. The despondent Moses, rejected by his own people, and ignored by Pharaoh, needed bolstering. To be an ‘Elohim’ to Egypt’s ruling ‘god’ meant that the contest would not be equal. The forlorn prophet would hold the whip hand under the guidance of the angels sent to bring plagues on the whole panoply of Egypt’s gods. Furthermore, Moses’ insistence that he had ‘uncircumcised’ lips was now overcome by Aaron’s role as his spokesman.

V.3-5 – “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt” – It is very important to understand what is meant by this statement. Yahweh did harden Pharaoh’s heart **after** the 6th plague, but not before, despite the KJV translation of V.13. It should be translated as Rotherham – “Then waxed bold the heart of Pharaoh,” or the ESV – “Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as Yahweh had said.” Pharaoh hardened his own heart as he did for the first six plagues. Then Yahweh stepped in and hardened his heart as Paul explained in Rom. 9:15-23. It is only in Ex. 9:12 after the 6th plague that we read, “And **Yahweh hardened** the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as Yahweh had spoken unto Moses.” For a fuller explanation of the detail and the reason for this, see comments on Rom. 9 on January 31 or August 1. In short, Yahweh acted in harmony with His character. He allowed Pharaoh free will for 6 plagues, but then hardened his heart to multiply the wonders in the land of Egypt that His name might be glorified (Ex. 9:16) – “And the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

V.6-13 – “When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent” – Some think that the word used here for “serpent” being *tannîyn* rather than *nâchâsh* means that it was a Nile crocodile. This is most unlikely. While there would no problem for God to turn the rod into a crocodile, the magicians would have had no hope of imitating that miracle as they did to the satisfaction of Pharaoh and the disappointment of Moses. The word *tannîyn* is used throughout the O.T. of whales, dragons (probably crocodiles) and snakes, etc. If there is a reason for the use of this word in lieu of *nâchâsh* it is because the serpent in Egypt was considered to be at the head of all other creatures (the reason why it was worn on Pharaoh’s crown) and was therefore representative of all, including the monsters of the Nile, the crocodiles.

The sign of the serpent considered in Ex. 4 which taught the way to overcome sin, had no effect on Pharaoh who wore on his crown a crooked serpent (one of the deities of Egypt). His magicians, Jannes (“he who seduces”) and Jambres (“he who makes rebellious” – 2 Tim. 3:8) replicated the sign probably by encasing snakes in wax and casting them on the ground to release them. Whatever the case, Pharaoh hardened his heart despite Aaron’s serpent (for it was his rod) consuming those of the magicians. It is noteworthy that the sign of the leprous hand which spoke of making a new start after sins have been forgiven is not performed before Pharaoh, because he hardened his heart and refused to hear. The two signs were primarily for Israel, but God directed Moses to use the first before Pharaoh (V.9).

V.14-25 – The first plague, turning the waters of the Nile into blood, had been held in reserve in case Pharaoh refused to capitulate to God’s demands (refer Ex. 4:9). The Egyptians worshipped the Nile and its creatures as a god. So Moses was commanded, “Get thee unto

Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water" perhaps for both devotions and ablutions. He was commanded, "thou shalt say unto him, Yahweh Elohim ("He who will become the mighty ones") of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go." There is no recorded response from Pharaoh. He seems to have remained stubbornly silent, so Aaron used the serpent rod as commanded and the Nile's waters turned to blood. All its fish died and the Egyptians had to dig around the banks to find water to drink. As Pharaoh looked on, "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened" (probably by using something akin to Condy's crystals), and Pharaoh walked silently and stubbornly away – "Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also."

There are two Hebrew words deployed for the hardening of hearts in Exodus. They are *châzaq* – to strengthen, prevail, harden, be strong – Ex. 4:21; 7:13,22; 8:19; 9:12,35; 10:20,27; 11:10; 14:4,8,17; and *kâbad* – to be heavy, be weighty, be grievous, be hard – Ex. 8:15,32; 9:7,34; 10:1.

Exodus 8 – The plagues of frogs and flies

V.1-15 – Moses was commanded to go to Pharaoh again and demand Israel's release, not for three days sacrifice in the wilderness, but for good (as in Ex. 6:11). The second plague would be frogs. The Egyptians worshipped *Heqt*, the wife of the great god *Khnum*, and she was a frog-headed goddess; the frog being sacred to her as the symbol of the resurrection, and the emblem of fertility. According to the writer of 'Dead Men Tell Tales', the frog "was reverenced by the people, and to have one around the dwelling place was a sign of good fortune and was supposed to ensure a fertile year for farm and family alike." However, "the frog was unclean to the Egyptians and their invasion would be abhorrent" ('Animals of Bible Lands'). So, the second plague was aimed directly at Egypt's false gods. Slimy and energetic frogs would penetrate every aspect of Egyptian daily life and even cling to their person (V.4).

Again, the magicians mimicked the miracle. It would not have been difficult to do so, given the vast numbers created by God's actions that were available to them. But the discomfort and inconvenience proved too much for Pharaoh and his people, so he relented and suggested he may be able to agree to Moses' first bid to go three days into the wilderness for sacrifice. Unfortunately for him, that option was no longer available. It was total release or more plagues. "Moses said to Pharaoh, Appoint me a time" (Septuagint) suggesting Yahweh's control, to which Pharaoh said "tomorrow" and was given an answer the next day. But the frogs died in their millions and after a while stank. However, "when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them."

There is an important prophecy in these events. The modern world has been swamped by three frog-like spirits or ideologies, namely, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, commonly called Humanism that arose out of the French Revolution in 1789-1819 (the frog being an ancient national symbol for France). There are only 14 references to frogs in the Bible. Eleven of these are in Ex. 8 and the plague of frogs is again referred to in Ps. 78:45 and Ps. 105:30. The only other reference to frogs is in Rev. 16:13 which speaks of the ideologies of the French Revolution that would bring 'insanity' to all peoples and lead them to Armageddon. In Ps. 78:45 we read, "and frogs, which **destroyed** (*shâchath* – to destroy, corrupt, go to ruin, decay) them." When the frogs died and were piled in heaps the land stank. As Humanism (also called Wokeism with its offshoots such as Post-Modernism) matures to a point where it 'stinks' in the view of many people (as we now witness) we know we are near the end – "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come....and shouldest destroy them which destroy (*diaphtheirō* – to rot thoroughly) the earth." However, consistent with Pharaoh's intransigence, once people are infected with the unclean 'spirits' like frogs they are incorrigible; i.e. hardened of heart.

V.16-19 – “Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt” – Archaeologists have identified from Egyptian relics that they had at least 2,200 ‘gods’ and lice was among them. It has been said that the Hebrew word *kennim* is from a root signifying “to fasten” and is thought to be a reference to the mosquito-gnat, and not lice as rendered in the KJV. The species is so small as to be hardly visible to the eye, but it has a very irritating and powerful sting. Others, like Easton’s Bible Dictionary stick with the KJV – (Heb. *kinnim*), the creatures employed in the third plague sent upon Egypt (Ex. 8:16-18). They were miraculously produced from the dust of the land. The entomologists Kirby and Spence place these minute but disgusting insects in the very front rank of those which inflict injury upon man. A terrible list of examples they have collected of the ravages of this and closely allied parasitic pests. The plague of lice is referred to in Ps. 105:31. Some have supposed that the word denotes not lice properly, but gnats.

What is important is that the magicians could not replicate this miracle and confessed as much to Pharaoh to their great chagrin, “This is the finger of God,” but he took no notice and hardened his heart. Israel had shared the discomfort and inconvenience of the first three plagues, but an exception was to be made for all the rest. Yahweh was separating His people.

V.20-32 – Confronted again on his way to the river, the demand was made of Pharaoh – “Let my people go, that they may serve me.” The fourth plague of flies would not affect the people of Israel in the land of Goshen as a testimony that the religious contest had come to a head – “to the end thou mayest know that I am Yahweh in the midst of the earth. And I will put a division between my people and thy people.” Now the people of Egypt would have a choice of siding with Israel and ignoring their obdurate and foolish king. The plague was so severe that “the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies,” and Pharaoh compromised – “Go ye, sacrifice to your God **in the land.**” This was rejected by Moses on the grounds that they would sacrifice sheep, “the abomination of the Egyptians” and be stoned.

There is conjecture as to what form of flies were involved as there is no equivalent in the text for flies (which is why “*of flies*” is in italics in the KJV and other translations). The word “swarms” is ‘ārōb and means just that). Some think it to be a reference to the *blatta orientalis*, or kakerlaque, a kind of beetle. These creatures suddenly appear upon the Nile in great numbers, and “inflict very painful bites with their jaws; gnaw and destroy clothes, household furniture, leather, and articles of every kind, and either consume or render unavailable all eatables. They sometimes drive persons out of their houses; and they also devastate the fields” (Kalisch). This would harmonise with “the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm” (V.24). The beetle was sacred to *Ra*, the sun god so that the miracle demonstrated that Yahweh controlled the very forms of nature which Egyptians worshipped.

After some parleying, Pharaoh agreed to Israel going to sacrifice in the wilderness, but Moses knew he was bluffing – “let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh,” and as soon as the plague was lifted “Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.” He was utterly incorrigible.

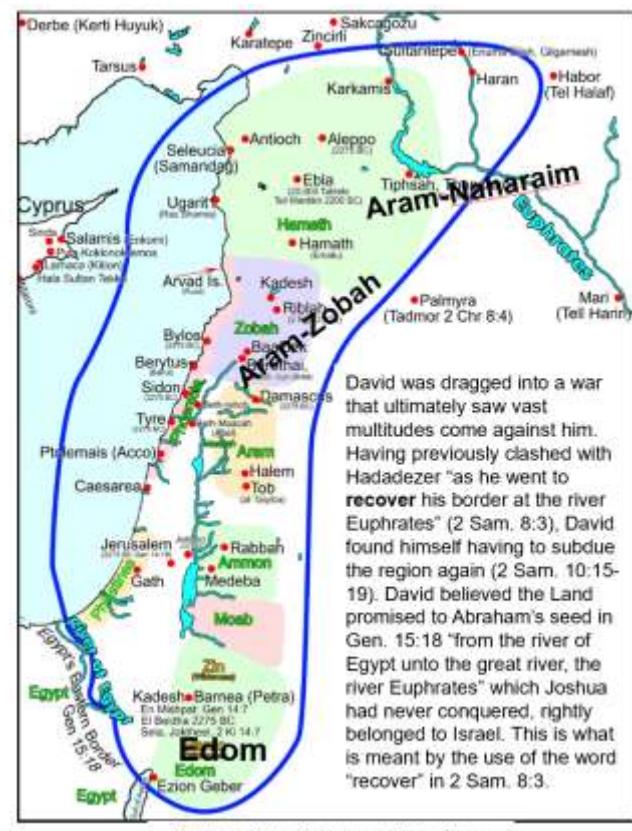
Psalm 60 – A desperate cry for help when in trouble

V.1 – “To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, **Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aramnaharaim and with Aramzobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.** O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 59 (for an explanation of the subscriptions to the psalms, see **Appendix 1**). The extensive superscription to this psalm sets its background. It is

clear that it was composed by David during his Syrian campaign (1 Chron. 16). A similar background was seen in Ps. 20, and some think also in Ps. 44. In the campaign against Hadadezer king of Zobah near the Euphrates (2 Sam. 8:3-8) when the Syrians (the 'Arams' or Arameans of the names in the superscription) also amassed an army and came against David in support of Hadadezer, David's forces suffered some reverses and he found himself fighting on three fronts, for even Edom took advantage of David's distractions and was menacing the south (2 Sam. 8:13-14 – the Syria of these verses should read Edom – see 1 Chron. 18:11-13). It seems there was a moment when the weight of the battle caused David real concern and he cried out to Yahweh for help, even suggesting that God had forsaken them because He was displeased with Israel. That was not so, but there were important lessons to be learnt by David and his army, and all who fight the battles of the Truth thereafter.

V.2-4 – (Young's Lit.) “Thou hast caused the land (eretz) to tremble, Thou hast broken it” – David feared the reverses in battle would endanger the Land of Israel (God's kingdom at that time – Acts 1:6), so David appealed, “heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh” (as in an earthquake, and this was a political earthquake) – “Thou hast shewed thy people **hard things**: thou hast made us to drink the **wine of astonishment**.” The battles that must be fought to uphold truth and right are never easy. David believed he was doing the right thing by endeavouring to conquer the territory outlined in the promise of Gen. 15:18-21. His former campaigns had been successful, but now things were going badly and his army was scattered and disillusioned. It was like they had been inebriated with laced wine. They needed to be rallied. A rallying point was required, and God gave it – “Thou hast given a **banner** to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed **because of the truth**.” The word “banner” is *nēs* – something lifted up, standard, signal, ensign, banner, sign. There are 20 occurrences in the O.T. and this is the 4th. The first two are found in Num. 21:8,9 where “Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness” on a “pole” (John 3:14). The next three are in Isa. 5:26; 11:10,12 where Christ will be set up as an “ensign” to the nations in the Kingdom. It is not hard to perceive what the rallying point is for the faithful who trust in God. Don't expect everything to go smoothly when defending truth or seeking to extend its interests – “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” David, as a type and forerunner of Christ rallied his army and ultimately defeated his enemies with God's help – “Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies” (V.12).

V.5-12 – Restored confidence in God marks the balance of the psalm which has within it a remarkable prophecy of the future based on the triumph over the enemies who seemed for a while to have the upper hand (“O God, which didst not go out with our armies” – V.10). Ultimate victory by David restored the security of Israel which he felt was in jeopardy (V.2) – “I will divide Shechem (west of the Jordan), and mete out the valley of Succoth (east of the Jordan). Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine (both east of Jordan); Ephraim also is the strength of mine head (the northern part of the Land west of Jordan); Judah is my lawgiver” (the base of David's kingdom). In other words, the whole Land was secure under him.



Courtesy of Steve Rudd – www.bible.ca/maps

But there were other deadly enemies to be subdued – “Moab, is my wash-bowl, Upon Edom, will I throw my shoe, Over Philistia! raise shout of triumph” (Rotherham for V.8).

V.9 – “Who will bring me into the **strong city**? who will lead me into **Edom**?” – Based on Abishai’s victory over Edom, David under inspiration projected into the future – “Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand” (1 Chron. 18:12). “Esau is Edom” (Gen. 36:8). Esau was the first Antisemite. He hated Jacob and sought to kill him. Hence, Edom became the prophetic name for latter day Babylon the Great (the Roman Catholic Harlot system of Rev. 17:5-6, persecutor of God’s servants down through the ages). This is easily proven by Isa. 34:9-11 being alluded to in Rev. 14:10-11 and Rev. 18:2 (as the margin of the AV shows – see comments on Isa. 34, June 10). The “strong city” was Selah (commonly thought to be a reference to Petra, but more than likely another fortress to its north). This “city” is the subject of prophecies like Num. 24:17-18; Isa. 11:10,14; 25:2-3; 26:5; Obadiah; Amos 9:11-12; etc. Christ and the saints will destroy Babylon the Great during a period of 40 years after Armageddon. This is where David’s desperate psalm of appeal ultimately leads. The culmination of Christ’s sacrificial work to become “a banner” to the nations.

Psalm 61 – Our Rock when the heart is overwhelmed

V.1 – “To the chief Musician upon Neginah (stringed instruments), **A Psalm of David**.

Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 60. Psalms 61 and 62 are companions. Written by David most likely during his exile at Mahanaim after the rebellion of Absalom and the seizure of the throne by him. The theme of Yahweh as a rock of salvation is found in both – “lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (61:2), and “He only is my rock and my salvation” (62:2). The word “rock” in both places is *tsûr* and refers to a huge boulder under which shelter can be taken. There are 76 usages in the O.T. and Deut. 32:4 is one where it is a title of Yahweh – “He is the **Rock**, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgement: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.” This was David’s confidence in a time of bitter trial. He had temporarily been evicted from his throne after a long period of illness by his favourite son who had deceived his father, defiled his wives and sought to kill him. Mahanaim seemed like “the end of the earth” where he could lament, “my heart is overwhelmed” (V.2).

V.3-4 – “thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy” – While in the town of Mahanaim he was safe from his enemies, but he had been banished from his favourite place – “the Tabernacle of David” – “I will abide in thy tabernacle (*ohel*) for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings” (of the Cherubim – Ruth 2:12). The tent that David had set up to house the Ark of the Covenant was an *ohel* (a round tent – see 1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1). This was his fervent hope in 2 Sam. 15:25 when he instructed Zadok to return the Ark to Jerusalem – “Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation.”

V.5-8 – “thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. Thou wilt prolong the king’s life” – David had confidence that Yahweh had heard his vows, and knew he would keep them. There is a heritage awaiting those who swear to their own hurt and change not (Ps. 15:4) for “He shall abide before God for ever.” But God manifestation is the key – “prepare mercy (*chesed*) and truth (*emeth*), which may preserve him.” These two words are used of God’s character in Ex. 34:6-7. We are called to be a people for His name (Acts 15:14).

The subscription to this psalm is found in the superscription of Ps. 62 – “To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun.” It seems Jeduthan whose name means “praising” was the chief musician at this time as appointed by David (1 Chron. 16:41-42; 25:6; 2 Chron. 35:15).

Romans 12 – Overcoming evil with good

In this chapter, Paul turns to practical matters – the way the principles of the Atonement should be applied in daily and ecclesial life.

V.1-2 – “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your **reasonable** service” – A living sacrifice is an enigma, and yet it is the only logical response to the call to follow Christ. Paul expressed this in another way in Gal. 2:20 – “I am **crucified** with Christ: nevertheless I **live**; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**: and the **life** which I now **live** in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” The word for “reasonable” is *logikos* – pertaining to the reason or logic; hence, Rotherham translates “your rational divine service,” and Young’s Lit. “your intelligent service.” In other words, gratitude for what God has done for us should be manifested by a life of sacrifice devoted to the service of Christ. The means whereby this can be accomplished is shown in V.2 – “And be not **conformed** (Middle Voice) to this world (*aion* – age): but be ye **transformed** (*metamorphoo* – Passive Voice) by the renewing (*anakainōsis* – renovation) of your mind, that ye may **prove** (Active Voice) what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The three verbs highlighted in bold each have a different voice in the Greek. Our destiny is framed by the choices we make in life. We can choose to conform to the world, or eschew its ways, but only we ourselves can make those choices. That is why the verb “conformed” is in the Middle Voice (where one does something to or for himself). However, the renewing or renovation of the mind is an act of God through His Word, hence, the Passive Voice (we receive His action), but we must act for ourselves in ‘proving’ what the will of God is in daily activity, hence, “prove” is in the Active Voice.

V.3-8 – One of the great challenges of ecclesial life is finding the right fit for the abilities we possess and the opportunities we have for service. Problems arise when ‘square pegs try and fit into round holes’ as the saying goes. Humble honesty as to what we can best contribute to the ecclesia is the only sensible way to avoid tension and disappointment. We should neither overplay nor downplay what we may have been given by God (remember the one talent man?), but always have in mind the Apostle’s advice to the Philippians – “in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves,” which is echoed here – “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Sadly, it is sometimes the case that those who are not necessarily qualified still seek to dominate, such as Diotrephes (3 John 9-10). Paul reminded the Romans that we “are one body in Christ” and the body can only function properly if every part performs the function God designed it for (V.4-6).

V.9-21 – The hallmarks of true followers of Christ are now listed by Paul. They must “be without dissimulation” (*anupokritos* – unfeigned, undisguised, sincere). These qualities speak for themselves, but kindness, diligence, empathy and prayerfulness are high on the list. The ESV translation of V.18 is helpful – “If possible, **so far as it depends on you**, live peaceably with all,” for it is not always possible to avoid conflict with the irascible. However, we must “recompense to no man evil for evil.” God will look after the matter in His time. Even the worst of men may be caused the ‘pain of remorse’ and conscience by having their erstwhile enemy do them good (“heap coals of fire on his head”), and this leads to one of the most important pieces of counsel given in the Word of God – “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Positive attitudes and actions are the best way to deflect and overcome negative and evil influences in our life.

February 3

Exodus 9 – The plagues of pestilence, boils and hail

V.1-7 – The demand, “Let my people go, that they may serve me” was made again with the threat that if ignored “a very grievous murrain” would fall on all the domestic animals of the field (V.3). The word for “murrain” is *deber* – a pestilence; in the sense of destroying. It is not known specifically what disease it was, but the effects were devastating on the whole range of domestic animals of the Egyptians, but did not affect those of the Hebrews. When Pharaoh saw the latter he hardened his heart again in spiteful obduracy. Again, God’s wrath had fallen on many of the animals worshipped by the Egyptians such as **Apis** the bull and **Hathor** the cow goddess who was the mother god of Egypt, and both had proven powerless before Israel’s God (there is still a very well preserved temple of Hathor at Dophkah in the Sinai Peninsular).

V.8-12 – Pharaoh was grievously affected himself by the sixth plague when Moses and Aaron were commanded to perform it in his presence – “Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven **in the sight of Pharaoh**” and “it became a boil (*shechîyn* – to burn; inflammation; an ulcer) breaking forth with blains (*’ăba’bû’âh* – to belch forth; an inflammatory pustule as an eruption) upon man, and upon beast.” Even “the magicians could not **stand** (*’āmad*) before Moses because of the boils,” and Pharaoh would have died from this plague had God not stepped in and saved him. This does not become evident until V.16 – “in very deed for this cause have I **raised** thee up, for to shew in thee my power.” The word “raised” is *’āmad* as in V.11 (“stand”), so that the RV correctly translates it, “for this cause have I made thee to **stand**.” Pharaoh had been taken from a sick bed on which he would have died. We know this from Rom. 9:17 where Paul cites this verse – “For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I **raise** thee **up**, that I might shew in thee my power.” The Greek word Paul used for “raise...up” is *exegeirō* – to rouse fully, i.e. (figuratively) to resuscitate (from death).

V.12 – “And **Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh**, and he hearkened not unto them; as Yahweh had spoken unto Moses” – It is evident that when Pharaoh was caused to stand up from his sick bed, he did not need to harden his heart because he now had no choice. God had hardened his heart in accordance with Paul’s explanation in Rom. 9:16-24 (see comments on January 31 or August 1). There was a purpose in this. The remaining four plagues would be a declaration to the world of the almighty power of Israel’s God – “that my name may be declared throughout all the earth,” and it was (see 1 Sam. 4:8).

V.13-35 – The seventh plague of hail began like the others with the repeated demand, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.” Failure to do so would lead to serious personal suffering matching that of the boils – “I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people....that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence.” But an amnesty was offered to Egyptians who acknowledged Israel’s God by taking their animals into shelter. Some did, and others did not.

“So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation” – The unprecedented storm destroyed humans, animals, trees and crops. “Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.” God preserved Israel and reverential Egyptians.

Desperately, Pharaoh confessed, “I have sinned this time: Yahweh is righteous, and I and my people are wicked,” and pleaded for the “mighty thunderings and hail” to cease, “and I will let you go.” Moses knew Pharaoh’s heart was hardened by God, so he curtly rejected his words, and as anticipated “the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go.”

Psalm 62 – Yahweh is the Rock of our salvation

V.1 – “To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, **A Psalm of David**. Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 61. This psalm is a companion of Ps. 61 and therefore has the same background. It pursues the theme of trust in Yahweh as David’s Rock (*Tzur*) and condemns the “mischief” of Absalom, Ahithophel and others who had expelled him from the throne (V.4 – “They only consult to cast him down from his excellency”).

V.2-4 – “He only is my rock (*tzur*) and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved” (*mōt* – to waver; by implication to slip, shake, fall) like the “bowing wall” and “tottering fence” of V.3. David’s enemies even expected his ‘edifice’ would collapse before they rebelled – “Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?” (Ps. 41:5), as he was very unwell for 4 years before the rebellion, a period of time that Absalom took advantage of (2 Sam. 15:1-6). During that period, David saw treachery, “they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.”

V.5-12 – “My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him” – David encouraged himself in God, and then repeated V.2 in V.7, and extended it in V.8 as an encouragement for others to do the same – “Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”

With men like Shimei (a man of low degree), Absalom and Ahithophel (men of high degree) in view, David intoned – “Surely **men of low degree** (*beni-adam*) are vanity, and **men of high degree** (*beni-ish*) are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.” This use of the Hebrew allows us to appreciate that (depending on context) *ish* represents men of higher status than an ordinary son of Adam, but they are all like “vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). Hence, the folly and vanity of practising “oppression” and “robbery” (in seizing power) and creating “riches” for personal gain.

“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God” – Whether by revelation from God, or his rumination upon the Word, David knew that all power belonged to Yahweh, and those who trusted in that fact, and waited on His mercy (*chesed* – Ex. 34:6-7), patiently enduring unjust treatment, would receive a just reward – “for thou renderest to every man according to his work.”

Psalm 63 – Thirsting for God in a barren wilderness

V.1 – “**A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah**. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is” – There are three possible background records to this psalm of David permitted by the governing phrase “in the wilderness of Judah.” They are: (1) 1 Sam. 22:5; 23:14-16 when David was in the wilderness of Judah being pursued by Saul; (2) 1 Sam. 26:1-5 when Saul again pursued David in that wilderness; and (3) 2 Sam. 15:16-30; 16:1-14 when David fled to Mahanaim from Absalom’s rebellion. The last verse of the psalm (V.11 – “But the **king** shall rejoice in God”) would suggest option 3, as David was then a deposed king, although while on the run from Saul he had been anointed as Israel’s next king. Interpretation of the psalm does not really depend on fixing the background, and all three scenarios are equally in view. The really important message is that spiritually attuned servants of God under duress, and suffering terrible trials will always be thirsty for spiritual sustenance in a dry and barren human landscape. Affliction and disruption to normal patterns of life tend to interfere with the quiet and fruitful communion with God and His Word that is possible when life is stable. Men in danger may cry out for God to intervene and save them from their enemies, as

David sometimes did (Ps. 59:1; 60:1), but this appeal is to be refreshed and restored deep in the inner man. That refreshment can only really come by rumination on “the waters of Shiloah that go softly” (Isa. 8:6) – the Word of God.

V.2 – “To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary” – David wanted to be in the place where he had experienced being, as it were, ‘within the veil.’ This request harmonizes with him being driven out of Jerusalem by Absalom. Reference to “the shadow of thy wings” (i.e. of the Cherubim of the Ark housed in his tent) also hints at this.

V.3-4 – “Because thy lovingkindness (*chêśēd*) is better than life” – To be the subject of God’s grace (*chêśēd* – see Ex. 34:6) really makes life or death irrelevant. As Christ said, “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna,” and so while there is life, praise is due – “Thus will I bless thee **while I live**: I will lift up my hands in thy name.”

V.5-8 – “My soul shall be satisfied as with **marrow** (*chêleb* – to be fat; hence the richest or choice part) and fatness” (*deshen* – the fat) – The fat of all offerings was Yahweh’s (Lev. 3:16) and the word for “marrow” is the word for “fat” in Leviticus. The fat around the vital organs spoke of the innermost feelings of the offeror which God sought. It was this that David gave to God – “my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips,” and on his bed, “in the watches of the night, would I breathe soft speech of thee” (Rotherham for V.6). This comes close to the idea of the word “meditate” in the KJV which is *hagah* – to murmur (in pleasure or anger); by implication to ponder. The first of 25 occurrences of this word is in Josh. 1:8 – “thou shalt **meditate** therein day and night.” In the quietness of the night, pondering and speaking to oneself the wondrous things of God is the greatest of all experiences, and as a result of it David could say, “My soul followeth hard after thee.”

V.9-11 – “But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth” – David was confident that Yahweh would deal with his enemies, and that they would receive a just reward. Even though he deeply mourned the death of Saul and of Absalom, he stood with his God and declared, “But the king shall rejoice in **God**; every one that sweareth by him (i.e. agrees with God) shall glory.” God is always right.

Romans 13 – God rules in the kingdom men

Paul starts with the fact of Dan. 4:17 – “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” when he says, “For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” We are required to submit to authorities providing they do not compel us to disobey God (1 Pet. 2:13-17; Titus 3:1; Acts 5:29). This also includes paying prescribed taxes.

V.8-14 – Repaying debts to lenders within the community is a manifestation of love and of fulfilling the law to “love thy neighbour as thyself.” A range of evil behaviours drawn from the 10 commandments are listed by Paul to be avoided at all costs by believers. It is axiomatic that “now is our salvation nearer than when we believed,” but Paul knew how easy it is to slip back into old habits and be overtaken by weariness in the way – “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” One of those works of darkness was “chambering” – *koitē* – a place for laying down for cohabitation, which is why “adultery” is mentioned in V.9. What is required is integrity before God. The flesh is weak and biased towards sin. It needs to be ‘cut off at the pass’ – “On the contrary, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** for gratifying your earthly cravings” (Weymouth).

Romans 14 – Considering those for whom Christ died

V.1-12 – Paul now turns to the tensions that existed in the ecclesia at Rome between Jew and Gentile. At the end of chapter 13 he had reminded them that it is not always easy to leave behind straight away the practices of the former life. This was true as well of converted Jews who were reluctant to give up what they had practiced all their life in keeping holy days and avoiding certain foods. So, he began – “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions” (ESV). Interestingly enough, and disturbing to the Jew, he described the ‘touch not, taste not’ approach as being “weak.” Judaisers regarded it as strength – “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” In dietary matters and respect for special days there needed to be mutual respect and neither side should try to thrust their scruples on others, which was obviously happening in the ecclesia. Providing God was given praise and thanksgiving in these activities there was no harm done. The Judgement Seat is coming and all must give account of their behaviour in the ecclesia. The ESV is correct when it translates V.10 – “For we will all stand before **the judgment seat of God**” (*theos*). The proof that “God” is correct is in the citation from Isa. 45:23 – “As I live, saith the Lord (Yahweh in Isaiah), every knee shall bow to **me**, and **every tongue shall confess to God.**” Why is this not the same as 2 Cor. 5:10 for example? – “For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ.**” The answer lies in Paul’s subtle reference to the work of the angels at the Judgement Seat. They will perform the interviews with individuals who must answer for their behaviour in relation to their brethren (Matt. 10:26) – “for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.” The angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” and are the recorders of all things that will be revealed at the Judgement Seat – Mal. 3:16 (Rotherham) – “Then, they who revered Yahweh, conversed, one with another,—and Yahweh hearkened, and heard, and **there was written a book of remembrance before him**, for them who revered Yahweh, and for such as thought of his Name.” This book is not the Book of Life which only contains names (Luke 10:20; Rev. 17:8). It is the record of the actions, motives and behaviours of responsible servants of God recorded and kept for the day of judgement (Ps. 56:8; Rev. 20:12), and will be used by the angels to interview the responsible before they appear before Christ to have their destiny determined by him. What will not be found in those books are sins that have been forgiven (Isa. 43:25; Prov. 28:13-14; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5; 2 Pet. 3:14). This is why Paul makes the subtle change and speaks of “the judgement seat of **God**,” whose representatives the angels are – “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to **God.**”

V.13-23 – The Apostle had given sound reasons as to why it is not good policy to “judge one another anymore” in relation to matters of holy days and dietary scruples. It is possible to put stumbling-blocks in front of others on matters which God Himself does not ask for, or condemn. The Jews could maintain their dietary restrictions and keep special days, but they must not try to impose those on Gentile converts or demand the ecclesia adopt them, for “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” However, similarly, the Gentiles must not aggravate the Jews by insisting on eating foods in ecclesial gatherings that were abhorrent to Jews (Weymouth) – “If your brother is pained by the food you are eating, your conduct is no longer controlled by love. Take care lest, by the food you eat, you lead to ruin a man **for whom Christ died.**” Eating such foods privately would not be a problem, it was the aggravation within the ecclesia Paul was concerned about. In short, we have obligations to ensure that we do not place stumbling-blocks of any kind in the path of those “for whom Christ died.” The aim should be – “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” What should be sought is a clear conscience (ESV) – “Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgement on

himself for what he approves.” Going against one’s conscience is acting in a manner that is “not out of faith” (*ou ek pistis*) – “For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin” (ESV).

February 4

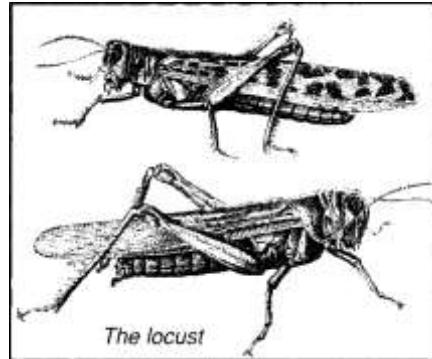
Exodus 10 – The plagues of locusts and darkness

The Divinely hardened heart of Pharaoh is used by Yahweh to demonstrate both to Egypt and to His people the remarkable deliverance He is about to effect in the Exodus.

V.1-2 – “Go in unto Pharaoh: for **I have hardened his heart**, and the heart of his servants” – This is consistent with Rom. 9:17-23 (see comments on Ex. 9 on February 3). After the 6th plague God had hardened Pharaoh’s heart as a vessel “fitted for destruction” in order that He “might shew these my signs before him,” so that future generations could have recounted to them “what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am Yahweh.” Pharaoh had no choice in the matter anymore. It was all now about Yahweh’s glory.

V.3-11 – “How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? let my people go, that they may serve me” – This sounds as though Pharaoh had a choice. He didn’t – “I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go” (Ex. 4:21). This became the case after six plagues in which Pharaoh did have a choice, but due to his obduracy that option was taken from him (Ex. 9:15-17). Humility is not a natural characteristic of human nature. This was a public warning to all who stood by, and all following generations that human pride and stubbornness can only lead to destruction. It was obvious to Moses that nothing would change Pharaoh’s mind so “he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.”

The 8th plague was to be locusts – “tomorrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast,” and so devastating to all remaining verdure would it be that nothing edible would remain. At that prospect Pharaoh’s servants complained, “How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve Yahweh their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” Accordingly, before Moses and Aaron had gone very far, they were recalled and Pharaoh offered a compromise with a rider – “Go, serve Yahweh your God: but who are they that shall go?” Moses’ response that the whole nation would leave with flocks and herds was rejected, as Pharaoh would only allow mature males to go into the wilderness to make sacrifice. The stalemate continued, and Moses and Aaron “were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence,” for even Pharaoh’s fearful servants were hardened (V.1). “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”



V.12-20 – A persistent east wind brought an unprecedented plague of locusts to a land not unfamiliar with such plagues so “there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.” So severe was it that “Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against Yahweh your God, and against you,” and sought forgiveness and removal of the plague. Moses intreated Yahweh and a west wind removed every locust from Egypt. As humble as Pharaoh may have appeared there was to be no change for “Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.” The glory of God would be manifested in the demise of this monarch for he had proven himself beyond redemption.

V.21-29 – The 9th plague was “darkness which may be felt” like the darkness that will soon fall in a spiritual sense on our world when the ‘light’ of the saints is removed to the Judgement

Seat of Christ (Isa. 60:2 – “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and **gross darkness** the peoples”). And, as it was in the land of sin and death (Egypt), there will be light for those spared from “the time of trouble such as never was” (Dan. 12:1) for “all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” God had totally separated His people from a dark world and in the process had completely exposed one of the most important Egyptian gods – Shu, the god of light, peace, lions, air, and wind. Nothing moved in Egypt for three days.

Called for the final time before Pharaoh, Moses received a totally unacceptable offer – “Go ye, serve Yahweh; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you,” and outrightly rejected it. Again, “Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go.” The end had come for negotiations and demands and counter demands. Moses departed never to see Pharaoh again under threat of death, and said – “Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.”

Psalm 64 – A plea for protection from enemies

V.1-2 – “**To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.** Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 63. This psalm of David deals with a time in David’s life when he was subject to a conspiracy that threatened his overthrow. The many similarities with Psalms 55, 10, 35 and others which deal with Absalom’s rebellion would suggest the same background. There are essentially two themes; V.1-6 – David’s plea for protection from the conspirators; and V.7-10 – David’s confidence in Yahweh’s intervention to vindicate the upright. The plea, “Hide me from the **secret counsel** of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity” would suggest that this was before the insurrection of Absalom became public. David knew that some were plotting against him. It was impossible to place any other interpretation on Absalom’s actions over the previous four years (2 Sam. 15:1-6), and then came the mealy-mouthed words of the principal conspirator – “let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto Yahweh, in Hebron” (2 Sam. 15:7).

V.3-6 – The modus operandi of the conspirators is detailed in these verses. Bitter words like arrows from a razor tongue (LITV – they “sharpen their tongue like a sword”) to “shoot at the innocent from a lurking place” (LITV) with no fear of accountability. LITV – “They make themselves strong in an evil plan; they talk of laying snares secretly; they say, Who shall see them?” They “accomplish a diligent search” to find as much negative criticism of the king as possible. David suspected what they were up to and he pleaded for help from God.

V.7-10 – David was confident God would intervene, and in the course of very troubling and dislocating events, He did. Absalom died from many ‘arrows’ in his heart (2 Sam. 18:14) – “God shall shoot at them with an arrow,” and Ahithophel had already turned his conspiratorial tongue against himself (“So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves”) by committing suicide. Wise Israelites saw the outcome of the civil war and were moved to “declare the work of God” (2 Sam. 19:9-11), and David saw in the outcome a lesson for all God’s servants – “The righteous shall be glad in Yahweh, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.”

Psalm 65 – Unto God will all flesh come

V.1 – “**To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David.** Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 64. Psalm 65 is a gem and begins with an unusual phrase – “In Zion, God, praise silently awaits” (ISV). The word “waiteth” is *dūmīyâh* and means stillness; adverbially, silently. It only occurs four times in the O.T., all in the psalms (22:2; 39:2; 62:1 and here). Its use

in Ps. 62:1 is helpful ("For God alone my soul waits in **silence**; from him comes my salvation" – ESV) for it speaks of the **quiet confidence** of the faithful who are assured that the promises of God will be fulfilled. So it is with Zion. The promises God has made concerning it are steadfast and sure, but silence reigns at present and the exultant praise of the glory of Zion must wait. That day will come and this psalm considers the wonders and joy of that time. The vows of all who have loved Zion and devoted their lives to the glory of God will then have been paid, and all men will then seek to make the same vow. Then it will be said of our God "that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

V.3-4 – But all men have a problem – the sinfulness of human nature – "Iniquities prevail against me," but thankfully, God has provided a redeemer, His son Jesus Anointed, through whom sins can be forgiven – "as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." 'Yahweh's salvation' was one of a kind – "Blessed is he whom thou choosest and causest to approach" (Darby) for of him it was said, "the man that is my companion" (Zech. 13:7); and "I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me" (Jer. 30:21). Through perfect obedience he entered the holiest of God's courts wherein "we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast" a hope "which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:19), and will culminate in a place in God's House of Prayer – "we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." The silent waiting will cease then.

V.5-8 – "Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples" – Prior to Armageddon "the nations raged, the kingdoms were moved" (Ps. 46:6), but God's judgements will calm the troubled sea of nations (Isa. 17:12-13; 57:20), so that Yahweh will become "the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea." Then "the outgoings of the morning and evening" will rejoice, for "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same Yahweh's name is to be praised" (Ps. 113:3).

V.9-13 – "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it" – The abundance that will grace the earth in the Kingdom Age will be due to water, both literal and spiritual. Dry and barren lands will flourish with fruitful fields supplying all the essentials of daily life for mortals, but even more importantly "the river of God" (Ps. 46:4; Rev. 22:1) will supply all the spiritual needs of a converted and contented populace who will serve our God "that hearest prayer" unto whom "all flesh shall come."

Romans 15 – With one mind and one mouth glorify God

V.1-7 wrap up Paul's arguments in chapter 14 about consideration for each other among Jewish and Gentile converts. Those who considered themselves strong "ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please" themselves. The primary example of this approach was Christ himself – "For even Christ pleased not himself" which is supported by a curious citation from Ps. 69:9 (an obvious Messianic psalm). That psalm says, "For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." The context of the psalm is about Messiah's temporary rejection by his own family (until he was raised from the dead) – Ps. 69:8 – "I am become **a stranger unto my brethren**, and an **alien** unto my **mother's children**." A little thought reveals why the Apostle quoted from this psalm. He had been talking about the need for harmony in Christ's ecclesial family in Rome. Serious tensions had arisen over differences of opinion in that 'family' to the point that they were judging each other on matters that God was not particularly interested in. They were being **alienated** from one another unnecessarily. Zeal can sometimes be misguided (Rom. 10:2). We need a zeal for God's House (the ecclesia) that is prepared to accept the consequences of misguided zeal such as had destabilized the ecclesia in Rome until

it can be rectified by education (2 Tim. 2:25). The Judaistic brethren were in effect ‘reproaching God’ and needed to refrain, while the reactive Gentile needed to sacrifice his position of ‘strength’ for the sake of those “for whom Christ died.” Just as in Christ’s family, the day came when they were reconciled, so by sacrifice, the same outcome might accrue for a divided ecclesia. Compare the principle of Rom. 5:10.

V.8-13 – After all, Christ had died to confirm the promises God had made to Abraham that both Jew and Gentile might find a place in His Kingdom. The Apostle had Mic. 7:20 in view in what he next says, “that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision (Jews) for the **truth** of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his **mercy**.” So, we have **truth** and **mercy**. Listen to Mic. 7:20 – “Thou wilt perform the **truth** to Jacob, and the **mercy** to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” God’s truthfulness and faithfulness to His covenants of promise was assured, but so was the promise of the mercy to be shown to the Gentiles – “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Paul followed with a series of citations about the inclusion of Gentiles (Ps. 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Ps. 117:1; Isa. 11:10), and while some of these pertain to the time beyond Armageddon, the principle remains the same. Given all that, the conclusion is, “Now **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in **hope**, through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

V.14-21 – Paul confirmed his right to set forth these things as “the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles.” His work was accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit in various ways that “through mighty signs and wonders” the Gospel might take root among the Gentiles where no-one else had preached Christ, so that prophecies like Isa. 52:15 might be fulfilled – “So shall he sprinkle many nations.”

V.22-33 – Writing from Corinth, Paul had plans to visit Spain and would stop by in Rome on the way – “I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while” (a better translation by the ESV). But first he had to deliver the contributions made to the Jerusalem Poor Fund to the suffering brethren and sisters in Judea, making the point that the Gentiles had an obligation to recognize their position that he had outlined in chapter 11.

Romans 16 – Honour to whom honour is due

V.1-16 – Paul had effectively rounded off the epistle in chapter 15:33 – “Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen,” but there were some practical matters that needed to be addressed. The first of these was to commend to them Phoebe a member of the ecclesia in Cenchrea who evidently conveyed the epistle to Rome. Personal greetings and encouragements were to be conveyed to those in Rome.

V.17-24 – Final instructions and personal greetings from Paul’s companions at the time come next. These instructions included standing aside from the recalcitrant who might ignore the Apostle’s sound advice on resolving the conflict in the ecclesia and continue to agitate, for their destructive influence would produce no good. We do have an obligation to avoid giving any support to those whose influence undermines the truth and “cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which” we have been taught (2 John 9-11).

V.25-27 – Not unlike the conclusion of chapter 11, the Apostle launches into a fulsome declaration of the greatness of the God who had made known through ‘the apostle to the Gentiles’ the ‘good news’ of the work of Jesus Christ by which “all nations” had the opportunity “for the obedience of faith.” We too can say with Paul, “To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.”

February 5

Exodus 11 – The tenth plague – Death of the firstborn

V.1-3 – “And Yahweh said unto Moses, Yet will I bring **one plague more** upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether” – The 10th plague was to be the worst of all, for not only would Pharaoh lose the heir to the throne, but every family, herd and flock would be bereaved of their male firstborn. Again, this final plague struck at the worship of Egypt, for the firstborn of Pharaoh was considered as the son of Ra (the chief deity), and therefore the object of worship. It needs to be understood that the interchange between Moses and Pharaoh in V.4-8 occurred while Moses was still in the palace of Pharaoh. Commenting on V.1-3, Barnes in his commentary says – Or “the Lord had said.” The first three verses of this chapter are parenthetical. Before Moses relates the last warning given to Pharaoh, he feels it right to recall to his readers’ minds the revelation and command which had been previously given to him by the Lord. The Exodus Expositor adds – The information now recorded (V.1-3) had been expressly revealed to Moses before he made his way to the palace; and he, doubtless, had already passed on the information to the people of Israel in Goshen.

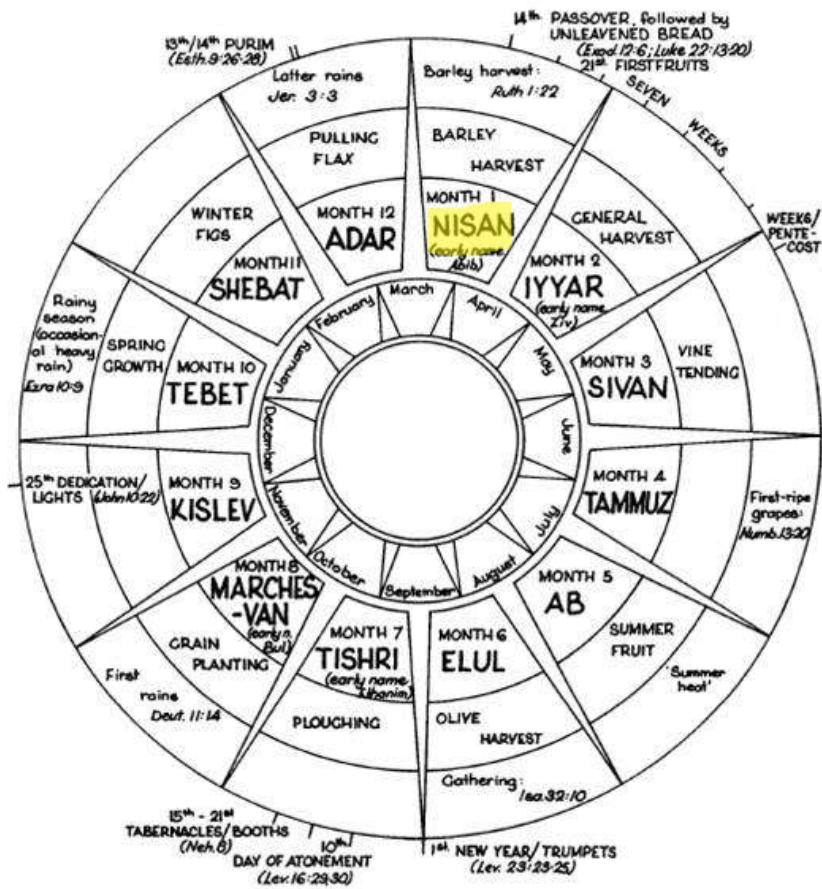
ESV – “When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely” – Moses knew that the outcome of his final audience with Pharaoh would see the last plague fall on Egypt and result in Israel’s release. He had not previously been informed how many plagues would be required, so this would have been a great relief to him and his people. Also, they would not leave as paupers for they would spoil the Egyptians who would urge them to leave and lavish on them many gifts. Moses noticed too, that the attitude of the ordinary Egyptians had changed. There was now much more respect – “the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants, and in the sight of the people.” This foreshadowed the respect that will be shown towards the greater Prophet like unto Moses in the future when God’s judgements fall upon the nations.

V.4-8 – “Thus saith Yahweh, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die” – The die was cast. Egypt’s firstborn males were doomed and there would “be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more,” and that cry would include urgent pleading with Moses for Israel to depart. However, the children of Israel would be untouched by the disaster, providing the blood of the Passover lamb was seen on their door posts and lintels. Doubtless seeing the unyielding look on his interlocutor’s countenance, Moses “went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.”

V.9-10 – Yahweh “hardened Pharaoh’s heart” again so that He might multiply His wonders “in the land of Egypt.” So, Ex. 9:16 was on the way to being fulfilled.

Exodus 12 – The Passover instituted

The Exodus Expositor introduces this chapter as follows – No chapter of the Old Testament is of greater significance to Israelites than this one. Describing in detail the ordinances of the Passover, it lays the foundation, and provides a pattern for the scheme of redemption devised by Yahweh, through the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God for the sin of the world.” In the delay that ensued between Moses’ ultimatum to Pharaoh, and the death of the firstborn at midnight on the fourteenth day of Abib, careful instructions are given to Israel’s leaders concerning the impending plague and what Hebrews must do to avoid it. The spiritual lessons involved are beneficial for God’s people of all time.



when nature springs forth in new growth. This points to the resurrection, and hence, a new beginning (Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 15:35-38,42). Abib later became known as **Nisan**. See the chart on the Jewish calendar year above.

"In the **tenth day** of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house" – A male lamb, or a kid of the goats, of the first year without blemish was required for each Israelite's house according to the number of its inhabitants. Smaller neighbouring families could share a lamb. It had to be corralled and inspected for 5 days (grace) "until the **fourteenth day** of the same month" when it was killed in the evening (Young's Lit. – "between the evenings," i.e. 3 pm to 6 pm), without breaking a bone (V.46), and its blood was sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of their houses with hyssop (symbol of humility). After being roasted over a fire (not eaten raw or sodden) it was to be eaten that same night with bitter herbs and nothing was to be left to the morning. Anything remaining had to be burnt.

It is not difficult to see the sacrifice of Christ in all of the above. John the Baptist declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) of Jesus who he knew was "without blemish" ("saying, I have need to be baptized of thee"). Jesus died at 3 pm on the 14th of Abib (a Wednesday, like the first Passover – see comments on Ex. 16:1), and was interred by 6 pm (i.e. all accomplished between the evenings). In the process, not a bone of him was broken (John 19:36). The blood of the everlasting covenant was shed to confirm the covenants made unto the fathers (Rom. 15:8). This opened the way for Jews and Gentiles to have access by faith to eternal life through the promises made to Abraham as members of God's house of which Christ is the **door** (John 10:9 – "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved"), and he is therefore, both the builder and owner of the house (Heb. 3:3-4) – a house built through the shedding of his blood (Eph. 1:7 – "In whom we

V.1-14 – "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" – Israel's **civil year** began in what is now the seventh month Tishri (known earlier as Ethanim). Now there was to be a new beginning, and so the **religious year** was styled **Abib** (Ex. 13:4), a word that signifies 'green ears of corn' and denotes the advent of spring, or the appearance of new life. As such, the month is appropriate to mark a new spiritual beginning for Israel. The word *abib* is rendered "in the ear" in Ex. 9:31, and "green ears of corn" in Lev. 2:14. Israel were constantly reminded thereafter that they left Egypt in this month (Ex. 23:15; 34:18; Deut. 16:1) underlining the importance of the new start and pointing to their baptism "unto Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2) as a type for us (1 Cor. 10:11). Abib (March/April in the northern hemisphere) is the time

have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"). In this way the doors of the 'house' in which we find refuge provide access through the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2). Perfect obedience to the death of the cross created what Peter calls "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The culmination of this "unspeakable gift" will be a multitude in glory (Rev. 1:5; 7:14).

The requirement to roast the lamb or kid over fire pointed to Christ's sufferings. It was not to be eaten raw (i.e. without trial); or sodden in water leading to dissolution (through the seeping of corruption) but roasted (perfected by affliction). It was to be consumed hastily with bitter herbs (to remind Israel why they were leaving Egypt – see the use of a cognate word in Ex. 1:14), and with loins girded, shoes on their feet and staff in hand ready to travel. Nothing was to be left to the morning for 'Christ' must be wholly 'consumed' (accepted and made part of ourselves).

The day was to be a perpetual memorial of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (the house of sin and death) as the keeping of our Passover feast is for us (1 Cor. 5:7). It was "an ordinance for ever" (*olahm* = unto the Millennium), hence the feast that follows.

V.15-20 – "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread (called "bread of affliction" – Deut. 16:3); even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses" – From the 15th of Abib (which became a special Sabbath – "an holy convocation") to the seventh and final day of the feast (also a special Sabbath) the feast of unleavened bread was to be kept with a strict ban on leavened bread imposed. Leaven represented the **bondage of corruption** from which they had been released. The feast was intended to bring home to Israel with urgent force the moral demands of their status as God's ransomed people. Keeping the feast for 7 days impressed the need for total rest from sin until the Kingdom arrives – "therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever" (*olahm*). Anyone who ignored this ordinance was to "be cut off from Israel" (excommunicated). This is taken up in the context of 1 Cor. 5 by the Apostle Paul where he was dealing with a unique case of adultery that had not been properly addressed by the ecclesia at Corinth, and he warned – "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (V.6). His counsel was to deal with the offender by withdrawing from him – "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us" (V.7). Purity of association and motive was required – "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven (the unrepentant offender), neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness (resistance to upholding right); but with the unleavened bread of sincerity (*eilikrinea* – purity as tested by sunlight) and truth" (V.8).

V.21-28 – "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel" – Detailed instructions were to be passed on by the elders so that all the people of Israel would be prepared. Nobody was to leave the house (the ecclesia) until departure for Sinai (as it is wise for us to do!). They were also to ensure subsequent generations never lost sight of the importance of this day (V.24-27).

"It is the sacrifice of Yahweh's **passover**, who **passed** (*pâsach*) over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt" – The Hebrew for "passover" is *pesach* a premission, that is, exemption (Strong). It occurs in the O.T. 56 times, 49 of which relate to the festival or offering of Passover. The root word is *pâsach* which means to hop, that is, (figuratively) skip over (Strong). Some have extrapolated the meaning of this word to arrive at 'hovering over,' but the evidence for such is inconclusive. It seems unlikely that the angel, or angels, systematically breaking the necks of Egypt's firstborn in 'unprotected' houses would have been hovering over the Israelites' houses on a night like this to protect them. When they came to a house featuring the blood of the lamb they 'hopped over it' and 'passed on' if we are to accept the basic meaning of the Hebrew words involved.

V.29-39 – “at midnight Yahweh smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle” – The angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood of the lamb was displayed, but in every Egyptian house, including the palace there was one dead. And they were bloodless deaths as Ex. 13:13 clearly implies, sustained from broken necks (see comments on Ex. 13).

Summary of the principles of Ex. 12

- V.3-10 – The need for humble obedience
- V.11-14 – The need for preparedness
- V.15-20 – The need for purity
- V.21-28 – The need for remembrance
- V.29-36 – The need for faith
- V.37-42 – The need for action
- V.43-51 – The need for unity based on truth

All came to pass as Moses had said. They were hurriedly thrust out, and spoiled the Egyptians by carrying away an abundance of wealth and cattle. 600,000 males left Egypt (suggesting a community of around 1.5 to 2 million), among them “a mixt multitude” who were soon to become a problem. They journeyed from Rameses to Succoth. They did not have time to prepare any food, so no leaven left Egypt with them.

V.40-42 – “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, **who dwelt in Egypt**, was four hundred and thirty years” – From the call of Abraham to the departing of Israel out of Egypt (as promised to him in Gen. 15:13-16) was 430 years to the day. This is inferred by the use of the statement “even the selfsame day” (V.41). Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran (Gen. 12:4). He was 105 when the 400-year long affliction began when Ishmael suggested Isaac was an illegitimate son begotten by Abimelech (Gen. 21:9), but Israel, “who dwelt in Egypt” were there for 215 years as the affliction continued.

V.43-51 – “This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no **stranger** eat thereof” – The record returns to the laws governing the partaking of the Passover meal. This must be due to the presence of a mixt multitude, as the first requirement to partake was to be circumcised. Foreigners and hired servants who were uncircumcised were excluded. The principle is clear. Partaking of the Passover was reserved for those in covenant relationship with God (Gen. 17:10-11). A stranger (Gentile) who joined himself to Israel and was circumcised (= baptized – Col. 2:11-12), was able to share in the benefits of the Passover, as we have been – “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

The Apostle’s summary of these events is found in Heb. 11:28 – “Through faith he (Moses) kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.”

Psalm 66 – Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands

V.1-2 – “**To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm.** Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 65. It has been suggested that Ps. 66 is a psalm of Hezekiah, and several proofs are noted, including the Assyrian practice of running over peoples’ heads with a chariot (V.12); language redolent of Hezekiah’s sickness at the time of the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem; “the rebellious exalt themselves” matching the blasphemy of Rabshakeh; the practice of Hezekiah in not attaching his name to a psalm as in the Songs of Degrees, and the subscription “on Neginoth” meaning plucking the strings suggesting connection with Hezekiah’s words after being healed, “we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments” (Isa. 38:20). This would seem to be correct, for the opening words of the psalm set its course – “Make a joyful noise unto God, **all ye lands.**” It is clearly about a time beyond Armageddon, and the Assyrian invasion in the days of Hezekiah is a type of Armageddon (Isa. 10:5,24; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5,6). In the aftermath of 40 years of

conflict in which the nations will be subdued they will “sing forth the honour of his (Yahweh’s) name: (and) make his praise glorious.”

V.3-4 – (Young’s Lit.) – “Say to God, How fearful are Thy works, By the abundance of Thy strength, Thine enemies **feign obedience** to Thee” – The word “submit” (KJV) is *kâchash* – to be untrue, in word (to lie, feign, disown). The margin of the KJV has ‘Heb. Lie’ which matches Young’s Literal translation. The comments made on Ps. 18 on January 8 are repeated here – Nations like Britain will be early in submitting to Christ’s demand to submit (Ps. 2:10-12; Rev. 14:6-7), but the clear implication is that they will do so disingenuously. They will not fully appreciate what submission means – full conversion to the truth and abandonment of their old ways and religion. That will not be an easy path, but like the Gibeonites of old who may have deceived Joshua, they will end up serving in matters to do with the Temple, for they will not deceive Christ. However, when conversion is complete, “All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name.”

V.5-7 – The dramatic deliverance of Israel at the Red Sea presaged the deliverance of Israel in the Second Exodus under Elijah (Isa. 11:11).

V.8-12 – The oppression of Judah in the days of Hezekiah by the Assyrians presaged the Gogian invasion of the Land in the latter days from which ‘Elohim’ will deliver His people.

V.13-15 – The joyful thanksgiving of Hezekiah at the deliverance from the Assyrian invasion and from his mortal sickness foreshadowed the future praise for Yahweh’s deliverance from the hand of their oppressors and the terrible ‘sickness’ they had manifested (Ezek. 39:24-29).

V.18-20 – ISV – “Were I to cherish iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not listen to me” – Hezekiah was delivered from death because of his uprightness (“remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart” – 2 Kings 20:3). Had he ‘cherished’ iniquity in his heart, his prayer doubtless would have been ignored. Ultimately, though only one man maintained perfect righteousness without sin. Our Lord Jesus Christ eschewed every inclination towards sin and maintained perfect obedience to his Father who “attended to the voice of (his) prayer,” and his acceptance by God paved the way for our salvation.

Psalm 67 – Yahweh make His face to shine upon us

V.1 – “**To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song.** God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 66. While there is no authorship ascribed, the identical superscription to Ps. 66 suggests the same author, probably Hezekiah. Certainly, there are indications within the psalm that this is so. The opening words reflect on the blessing on true Nazarites by the high priest in Num. 6:24-25, and this suggests a denouement in the Kingdom Age.

V.2-3 – “That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations” – The redemption of Israel will be both an incentive for all nations to turn to God, and to offer praise to Him. This was foreshadowed when the Assyrians were wiped out in the days of Hezekiah (as will Gog in the same place), and he himself was cured of a mortal affliction (2 Chron. 32:23 – “And many brought gifts unto Yahweh to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations”) – “Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.” This refrain is repeated in V.5.

V.4-7 – “let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth” – This can only be when the Kingdom is established and Christ rules supremely over all the nations with “his ancients gloriously” (Isa. 24:23). V.6 hints at the reason for the praise given to Yahweh. (Young’s Lit.) – “Earth **hath**

given her increase, God doth bless us” – In the past tense, this points to the redemption and exaltation of Israel after the pattern of Hezekiah’s times when in the wake of the triumph over the Assyrian the Land brought forth abundantly (2 Kings 19:29). The surrounding nations added that fact to the miraculous overthrow of Assyria, and concluded that there was true value in serving Yahweh – “God shall bless us (Israel); and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

Mark 1 – Behold my servant

THE FOUR-FOLD VIEW OF CHRIST IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

Each book presents the subject from a different point of view — JESUS IS

<i>King in Matthew</i>	<i>Servant in Mark</i>
<i>Man in Luke</i>	<i>Son of God in John</i>

Book	Written for	Illustrating	General Character	Theme	Based on	Dominant Idea	Symbolism	Significance
MATTHEW	Jews	Jesus as Messiah	Prophetic	Kingship	Past revelation	Fulfilled	Lion	Royalty
MARK	Romans	Jesus as all-powerful	Practical	Servant	Present action	Straightway	Ox	Service
LUKE	Greeks	Jesus as the perfect man	Historical	Son of Man	Future glory	Compassion	Man	Humanity
JOHN	Believers	Jesus as God manifest	Spiritual	Son of God	Eternity	Believe	Eagle	Divinity

V.1 – “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” – Mark’s Gospel record reflects the ox face of the cherubim and presents Christ as Yahweh’s Servant. For more detail on this aspect see **Appendix 2**. Mark’s record is the shortest of all four and was written for a Gentile readership where the focus is largely on matters of importance to them.

V.2-8 – Mark does not focus primarily on history, as there is no mention of Christ’s birth, childhood or anything else up to his baptism. He is introduced by John the Baptist – “Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee” (Mal. 3:1). The message was of “a voice of one crying aloud—**In the wilderness**, prepare ye the way of the Lord, straight, be making his paths” (Rotherham). There is an emphasis on the need to get away from the cloistered stuffiness of Judaism in Jerusalem and make a new start “in the wilderness,” hence V.4 – “John the Immerser came, **in the wilderness**, proclaiming an immersion of repentance for remission of sins” (Rotherham), and there was a response (V.5). What they found there was a humble and completely committed and selfless prophet who was a forerunner and model of their Messiah.

V.9-13 – “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan” and as he came up out of the water “the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him” was accompanied by a voice from heaven declaring, “Thou, art my Son, the Beloved,—In thee, I delight” (Rotherham). Immediately though, he was driven by the Spirit into “the wilderness” and “he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan.” The repetition of “**the wilderness**” should not be missed. The reason why so many Jews did not respond to Jesus Christ was that they felt so comfortable in the traditions and practices of entrenched rabbinical Judaistic religion. The ritualism and awe of temple worship and the keeping of holy days and feasts held them in a thraldom that most could not leave. It is no different today with the sway over its followers exercised by the Catholic Church. What they needed was to get away from that into “the wilderness” so that they could see it for what it was from a different perspective – a desolate and doomed institution. Jesus was entirely focused “in the wilderness” where he battened away the temptations presented and was succoured by angels. What a difference that was to the cloisters of Jerusalem.

V.14-20 – When John was imprisoned by Herod, Jesus began his ministry and preached, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

As we know, the Kingdom was still 2,000 years away, but he was the nucleus of it and without believing in him there would be no access to it – Luke 17:21 (Rotherham) – “For lo! the kingdom of God, is, among you.” In Galilee he began to call his first disciples beginning with fishermen – “Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men,” and Simon (Peter), Andrew, James and John forsook their trade and followed him.

V.21-28 – The first miracle that Mark records is the healing of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum although Jesus had performed many miracles before that. It was a Sabbath (V.21) and the Pharisees would have been angered by what happened. They were later to blasphemously accuse the Lord of drawing on the power of a Gentile god – “This man only expels demons by the power of Baal-zebul, the Prince of demons” (Weymouth for Matt. 12:24). Here was a man in their synagogue who, to use the vernacular of the time, was ‘possessed by demons’. He was in fact insane and was a perfect representation of the spiritual state of the Judaistic scribes and Pharisees. Christ could cure their ‘insanity’ if they were willing, but they were not (that would have to wait until the Millennial Sabbath), while the Gentiles were willing and many were to be cured of the ‘insanity’ of pagan ignorance. This is the reason why Mark focuses on this particular miracle in Capernaum where the Via Maris (“the way of the sea”), the coastal road that ran from Egypt to the north and passed through Capernaum made it a hub for Gentile travellers (Isa. 9:1-2) – “**the way of the sea**, beyond Jordan, in **Galilee of the nations**. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

Unsurprisingly, “his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.”

V.29-39 – The healing of the insane man and of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law on a Sabbath did not set the town alight until the Sabbath had ended – “And **at even**, when the **sun did set**” indicates that the rabbinically influenced Jews of “the city of comfort” held off until 6 pm when the Sabbath ended, then multitudes gathered at the door of Peter’s home. Christ healed their physically sick, but it was going to be a struggle to heal the spiritually ‘insane’. Early next morning he went into the wilderness to take stock of the situation and pray. When the disciples found him, he directed them to new fields of labour – “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth,” and there, significantly, he entered their synagogues “casting out demons.”

V.40-25 – The healing of a leper is recorded by Mark as an encouragement to his Gentile readership – “there came a leper to Jesus entreating Him, and pleading on his knees. ‘If you are **willing**,’ he said, ‘you are able to cleanse me.’” (Weymouth). The Jews treated Gentiles like lepers and would not go near them (Acts 11:2-3). Apart from Miriam, no Jew had ever been cured of leprosy, but Naaman the Syrian had been, by faith (Luke 4:27). He was initially unwilling, but was persuaded to ‘believe a report’. So did this man, and “Moved with pity Jesus reached out His hand and touched him. ‘I am **willing**,’ He said; ‘be cleansed.’” (Weymouth). Told not to publicize his healing until he had presented himself to the priests who had never seen a cured leper, with the aim that they might consider who could possibly do such a thing and step away from their ‘insanity’, the cured leper disobeyed and caused serious harm to the ongoing preaching work of Christ in towns. However, the outcome was that he went back to where he began – “Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was **without in desert places**: and they came to him from every quarter” to the **wilderness** where a way could be prepared for the willing – “in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

February 6

Exodus 13 – The law of the firstborn

V.1-2 – “Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine” – Israel was Yahweh’s firstborn national son (Ex. 4:22). Because Pharaoh would not release Israel, Egypt’s firstborns were killed in the 10th plague (Ex. 4:23; 12:29). On that basis, God claimed all the actual firstborns of men and beasts as His own.

V.3-10 – “Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to Yahweh” – The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be kept every year as a memorial of their deliverance from Egypt and their ‘Exodus’ on the 15th of Abib. It was a regular reminder that once being delivered from the bondage of sin and death they should never return to it. The only way to achieve this was to make it “a memorial between thine eyes, in order that the law of Yahweh may be in thy mouth” (Rotherham for V.9). We do the same every time we keep the memorial feast (1 Cor. 5:7-8; 10:16-17; 11:23-26).

V.11-16 – “thou shalt set apart unto Yahweh all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be Yahweh’s” – This ordinance strongly confirmed that all firstborns belonged to Yahweh. Because Israel was God’s firstborn son – “every firstling of an **ass** (*chāmôr* – the male ass) thou shalt redeem with a **lamb**; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt **break his neck**.” Israel had been redeemed with the Passover lamb, but Israel proved to be a stiff-necked people (Ex. 32:9; 33:3,5; 34:9), as Pharaoh was. The male ass being a symbol of Israel, this ordinance was a salutary reminder that stubbornness in resisting God’s will would result in a similar fate to Pharaoh and his people. The lesson was to be passed on to their children, for a firstborn son would ask why his father paid 5 shekels (grace) to redeem him (Num. 18:15-16), and why the firstborn family ass cost the life of a lamb.

The hardening of Pharaoh’s heart

As we have been reading chapters like Rom. 9 and Ex. 7 through 11 about the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, it needs to be pointed out that Yahweh did not harden Pharaoh’s heart until the 6th plague (Ex. 9:12). Up to that time Pharaoh had free will to make decisions for himself without Divine intervention on his mind. It should be noted that the suggestion in Ex. 7:13 that Yahweh hardened his heart is incorrect. Literal translations will show it was Pharaoh, not Yahweh. Thereafter, you do not read of Yahweh hardening Pharaoh’s heart until Ex. 9:12 onwards. Paul in Rom. 9 explains what happened. God is sovereign in matters of mercy (Rom. 9:14-18). He can harden hearts, but always works by His own inflexible principles. Paul cites Ex. 9:16 in Rom. 9:17 and uses the Greek word *exegeiro* for “raised.” The Hebrew word in Exodus is *amad* = to stand. It is about raising Pharaoh up from a death bed (not from birth as is commonly thought), as he had been sorely afflicted by boils and blains and would have died without God’s intervention. That is why Paul says in Rom. 9:21-22 that God who is sovereign could make of the same lump of clay vessels to honour (Israel), and harden vessels of dishonour (Pharaoh and co.), who were “fitted” to destruction. The Greek verb is in the Passive Voice (not as some have thought in the Middle Voice). This means Pharaoh was the receiver of Yahweh’s actions, not the doer of something to or for himself (as the Middle Voice implies). Beyond the 6th plague (6 opportunities resisted as men have resisted Yahweh for 6 millennia) determined his destiny.

V.13 strongly hints at the way all the firstborn of Egypt had been slain by the Passover angel. Israel had been redeemed by the shedding of the blood of a lamb slain (Ex. 12:12-13; Gen. 3:21; Heb. 9:22; Rev. 5:6; 13:8), but a firstborn ass (the symbol of Israel) unredeemed by a lamb was to have its neck broken (a bloodless death). That suggests the method by which the

Egyptian firstborns were slain. No blood, no obvious injuries would make those deaths even harder to endure. Hence, Israel could spoil the distraught Egyptians and leave without immediate intervention by a Pharaoh whose heart Yahweh had irreparably hardened.

V.17-22 – “God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt” – Newly baptized people are “babes” (1 Pet. 2:2) and are not ready for warfare. As it turned out, most were not ready for trials that came along pretty soon, and desired to return to Egypt. However, they left Egypt organized and in rank – “the children of Israel went up **harnessed** out of the land of Egypt.” The word “harnessed” is *châmûsh* – staunch, that is, able bodied soldiers. Young’s Lit. translates, “by fifties.” The only other three occurrences it is translated “armed.” In other words, while they were not yet ready for war, they were being prepared for the warfare of faith that awaited them in the wilderness of probation. It is important when entering the community of believers to accept, and fully support (in rank) the objectives and standards of behaviour of those aiming for the Land of Promise. We are in this together, and need each other more than we sometimes appreciate. Let us walk in rank.

Some carried Joseph’s coffin – “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” fulfilling the oath extracted from Israel by Joseph’s declaration of faith (Heb. 11:22). Paul alludes to this, and the lessons arising from it in 2 Cor. 4:10 – “Always **bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

“Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” – Michael, the angel of Yahweh’s presence dwelt in the cloud (Isa. 63:9; Ex. 14:19,24; 23:20-23; 33:9). It was his role to lead Israel to the Land of Promise, just as it is Christ’s role today to lead us through the “great and terrible wilderness (of our probation), wherein (are) fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there (is) no water” (Deut. 8:15).

Exodus 14 – Israel baptized in the Red Sea

V.1-9 – “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before **Pihahiroth**, between **Migdol** and the sea, over against **Baalzephon**: before it shall ye encamp by the sea” – Israel were guided by the cloud to the northern end of the Red Sea (Ex. 13:21-22). The reason given in Ex. 13:17 was that they would not see war for which they were not ready. The location of the three places named is disputed by some, particularly those who incorrectly assert that Mt Sinai is in the Arabian Peninsula and not in its traditional location in the Sinai Peninsula. They must do this because it would be impossible for a nation of 2 million people to reach Mt Sinai in the 50 days described in Ex. 19:1. When this place is visited, it is amazing how it appears exactly as described with a mountain range on either side that locked Israel up against the sea, just as Pharaoh said – “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.” Pharaoh and his advisors lamented – “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” Accordingly, Yahweh again hardened Pharaoh’s heart and led him to his doom in the Red Sea.



V.10-18 – The first real test came for Israel as Pharaoh’s 600 war chariots approached, and they failed – “And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou

taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" Sadly, it is not unknown for folk who come into the truth with joy and enthusiasm to immediately stumble at the first hurdle. Christ taught this in the Parable of the Sower. Of the seed received into stony ground he said – (Rotherham) "he no root in himself,and, there arising, tribulation or persecution because of the word, straightway, he findeth cause of stumbling." Many in Israel had said – "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." The signs, the plagues and the blessings had not produced faith.

Great leaders can sometimes provide wrong advice under duress. Moses does so at the brim of the Red Sea wedged between the hills of Pi-hahiroth and Baal-zephon with Pharaoh and his army looming up at their rereward. Many Israelites thought that leaving Egypt would be fatal to their future (Ex. 14:12) and that it would have been better to remain in the 'world' despite its oppression. Moses' advice "stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh" would under different circumstances be quite sound, but not when you stand at the edge of the waters of baptism (1 Cor. 10:1-4). That is why Yahweh contradicts him in verse 15. "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." Only through baptism can we be released from Pharaoh's oppression.

V.19-29 – "the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" – This produced darkness for the Egyptians and light for Israel. With arm outstretched over the sea, Moses precipitated an east wind which blew all night to stack up the Red Sea into two walls (V.22; Ps. 78:13) so that as Israel passed through they were completely surrounded by water and were figuratively baptized – "all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Once Israel were on the eastern side of the Red Sea, the delayed Egyptians (by the cloud) plunged into the path in their chariots which were further delayed by their chariot wheels falling off. As "they drove them heavily" in a desperate attempt to turn them around, the walls of water fell in from the east side towards them, sweeping them drowned on to the western shore (Heb. 11:29 – "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned"). Pharaoh too, died, in fulfillment of God's promise (V.4,17,18; Ex. 15:19; Ps. 136:15)

V.30-31 – "Yahweh saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and **Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore**" – There is an important lesson here. In baptism (1 Cor. 10:2) we leave behind "the old man" (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9) and he should be left on the opposite shore as we march towards the Promised Land by **faith** – "the people feared Yahweh, and **believed** Yahweh, and his servant Moses" (Christ in our case).

Psalm 68 – From Sinai to the Sanctuary

Ps. 68 has been described by one brother as "Probably the most majestic psalm of all." Others have said, "The commentators agree in judging this psalm one of the most magnificent of all in its forceful sweep of thought and language," and "The psalm is titanic...in its lyric force and grandeur." It is for this reason that only relatively brief comments can be made in this forum. Extracts from the study notes "Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ" and some additional selective comments will be made.

V.1 – "To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him" – The highlighted phrase is the

subscription of Ps. 67. The subscription of Ps. 68, found in the superscription of Ps. 69 is, “To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim” (meaning that it was appointed for public use at the Feast of the Passover). Another unique feature is the use of the Divine name in two forms (Yah and Yahweh) and several titles such as El, Elohim, and Shaddai (only used in one other psalm). What follows is from the “Events Subsequent” notes.

V.1 – “Let God arise” — This verse is a direct quotation from Num. 10:35 except that David makes one important change to Moses’ words. Each day the movement of the Ark was heralded by the words, “Rise up, Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before.” Similarly, when the Ark rested Moses said, “Return, O Yahweh, unto the many thousands of Israel” (Num. 10:33-36). It is significant that these words are quoted in a psalm which deals with the bringing up of the Ark to Jerusalem. Both the progress of the Ark from Sinai to Canaan, and its installation by David in Jerusalem were highly typical events. The Ark of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ and its cherubim, the glorified saints will again move from Sinai into Jerusalem. Hence David substitutes ‘Elohim’ for ‘Yahweh’, for then ‘he who will become’ will be manifested in a multitude of ‘mighty ones’. No longer will Yahweh go before the nation and return to it as in the days of Moses, but He will be manifested in a host who will bear His name.

V.4 – “extol Him that rideth upon the heavens by his name Yah” – (Rotherham) “that rideth through the waste plains.” The word “heavens” is *arabah* and should read Lit. “through the deserts.” This compares beautifully with Deut. 33:2 as the Arabah is the arid region south of the Dead Sea, to the east of Paran and in the proximity of Seir.

V.17 – “The chariots of God are twenty thousand” – (Rotherham) “The chariots of God are two myriads, thousands repeated.” As stated in the notes on Deut. 33:2 this is a symbolic number representing an innumerable multitude – the multitudinous Christ. Chariots are vehicles of warfare (Ps. 20:7; Ex. 14:7). These being the ‘chariots of Elohim’ are symbolic of Christ and the saints in warlike manifestation as the vehicle of Yahweh in His controversy against the nations. It is upon these chariots that He rides through the Arabah (V.4).

“even thousands of angels” – The word “angels” is *shinan* signifying to change, to reiterate, a repeating. Hence, Rotherham – “thousands repeated.” Other translations provide the alternative, “the changed ones.”

“the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” – Bro. Thomas translates, “The Lord among them, Sinai in the holy.” While this is literally correct there are other translations which appear to throw light on David’s meaning. In his margin, Rotherham quotes Ginsburg who translates, “the Lord hath come from Sinai into the sanctuary.” The Companion Bible has, “Yahweh among them (the chariots and the angels) hath come from Sinai into his sanctuary.” The Jerusalem Bible has, “the Lord has left Sinai for his sanctuary.” The word *adonai* should be Yahweh, being one of the 134 changes made by the Sopherim. This beautifully harmonizes this verse with verse 4.

The saints are pictured as the cherubic-chariots of Deity amongst whom is found Yahweh (Christ – the Father’s name-bearer) riding from the precincts of Sinai through the Arabah and into his sanctuary – Jerusalem. Once again, as in Deut. 33:2, the point of departure for Christ and his saints is Sinai, proving almost conclusively that it is the place of judgement.

V.18 – “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive” – Paul quoted these words in Eph. 4:8 and applies them to the resurrection and glory of Christ, as the guarantee of the resurrection and glorification of his faithful brethren. This confirms the fact that the psalm deals with things that were beyond the days of David.

Additional selective comments on Ps. 68

V.5-10 – “A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation” – This bracket of verses deals with Israel’s wilderness wanderings on which the psalm is based. It is a chilling reminder that an entire generation perished in the wilderness through lack of faith, and must face judgement again at Mt Sinai. They will be rejected to wander aimlessly until they perish again in “the wilderness of the peoples” (the “outer darkness” of Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). The sad fact is that from every generation accounted responsible there will be fathers who were responsible for their family who failed to lead, sometimes compelling a ‘forsaken’ wife to undertake the spiritual leadership the husband had abandoned, and for which he will be rejected. Perhaps this is the meaning of V.5. The Judgement Seat will create the fatherless and the widows, but God will not forsake them.

V.21 – “God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses” – It is almost impossible not to think of Sisera when considering this verse – “Then Jael Heber’s wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died” (Judges 4:21). This was a graphic portrayal of Gen. 3:15 and the crushing of the serpent’s head by Christ in his sacrifice. “The woman” (God’s mind in the Atonement) had prevailed as Christ and the saints will prevail over sin and rebellion from Armageddon and beyond until the serpent is finally destroyed (Rev. 20). It will be that mission that will see the nations submit – “Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee” (V.29).

For a full exposition of Ps. 68, see Vol. 2 “Psalms” by Christadelphian Scripture Study Service.

Mark 2

V.1 – Jesus returned to Capernaum (“the city of comfort”) which had become his home base after his rejection from Nazareth (Luke 4:29-31; John 2:12). Interestingly, the ESV translates the last words of this verse – “it was reported that he was at home.” There was a man waiting for him that needed ‘comfort’.

V.2-12 – The enacted parable of the healing of the palsied man reveals the two great needs of the human race. Palsy is a paralysis, and so is human nature. It paralyses men morally and physically. This man, who doubtless had faith, and perhaps induced his four friends to take him to Christ, was seeking a cure for his physical disability. The Lord’s actions are revealing. The **five** men (seeking ‘grace’) could not get near the Lord because of the crush outside the house which had a veranda. So they made their way up the external stairs and removed portion of the roof of the veranda in order to lower the palsied man at the feet of the Lord. His next words scandalized the Scribes and Pharisees present (V.21) – “Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Christ is teaching a very important lesson. Men have two great needs – one is **moral** and the other is **physical**. Without the moral, there is no access to the physical. Our first great need is the forgiveness of sins. This is ‘easy’ compared to healing sickness or changing the nature after acceptance at the Judgement Seat. That is why Christ says “it is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee” than to cure a mortal disease (V.23). Forgiveness of sins is available to those who acknowledge God’s righteousness and ask to be forgiven, and if they are found in a reconciled state at the Judgement Seat, a little more effort will be required to grant them immortality.

V.13-17 – A little hint is provided to Mark’s perceptive Roman readers when he records – “he went forth again by the **sea** side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.” The sea of course is Galilee (“of the nations” – Isa. 9:1). The time would come when multitudes of Gentiles would be taught by Christ’s ambassadors.

The call of Levi (or Matthew) is another little morsel for his Gentile readers. As a tax gatherer for the Romans he was despised by his Jewish contemporaries which is why other tax gatherers and “sinners” had no diffidence to enter his house to be with Christ. The Pharisees complained, “Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” His simple answer was (Weymouth) “It is not the healthy who require a doctor, but the sick: I did not come to appeal to the righteous, but to sinners.”

V.18-22 – The disciples of John the Baptist were still steeped in the Judaistic thinking of the nation and needed to see things from a different perspective. They queried why Christ’s disciples did not fast like them and the Pharisees. The Lord’s answer is incisive – (ESV) “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.” A new attitude was required, lest there be rent and spillage. It is unwise to mend an old disintegrating garment with a new piece of cloth, and a new wine skin must be used for new wine because the old is not flexible enough to sustain the pressure of fermentation (change). The message was clear – people needed to leave behind law and ritual and come and join the bridal party of grace through faith (see Rom. 7:1-2).

V.23-28 – “he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?” There are three records of this incident that are very similar – Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5. The following comments were made on the latter.

The rabbis’ had developed 39 different regulations governing what might not be done on the Sabbath day. These included harvesting which is what they accused the disciples of. The Lord advanced David’s partaking of the newly replaced loaves of shewbread on a Sabbath day (1 Sam. 21:5-6) which was reserved exclusively for the priests (Lev. 24:5-9). How was that justifiable? For the same reasons Christ worked on the Sabbath day to heal and cure. David had been anointed king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:12-13). He had already in his youth worked out that the Aaronic priesthood would be superseded by the Melchizedek king-priesthood of Christ of whom he was now the forerunner (Ps. 132:2-9). Accordingly, when he brought the Ark from Kirjathjearim to place it in a tent of his own pitching (1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1) and not in the Tabernacle of Moses, as king he wore a priestly robe and dispensed to the people (both Jew and Gentile, men and women) bread and wine as Melchizedek had done (Gen. 14:18). That is why David could eat the shewbread without condemnation. Jesus Christ too, was “Lord of the Sabbath” (Luke 6:5). Like David he operated above the Law for a superior and more permanent cause.

V.27-28 – “And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore **the Son of man** is Lord also of the sabbath.” There are 84 occurrences in the Gospel accounts of the title “the Son of man” that the Lord uses concerning himself. Perhaps surprising to some is that he only calls himself “the son of God” four times in those records. We intuitively think that the title “the Son of man” is a reference to Christ’s mortal likeness to ourselves. This is not so. The title is drawn from Ps. 8:4 and 80:17. Ps. 8 was written by David after the slaying of Goliath. He foresaw in this event the victory of Christ over sin and death (hence, Ps. 8 features prominently in Heb. 2). The title refers to Christ’s delegated authority from his Father to conquer all carnal things. A simple checking of the context wherever the title occurs will confirm this fact. This is the reason why Christ deliberately performed miracles on the Sabbath. His Father had to work on Sabbaths after Adam had sinned, and has continued to do so – John 5:17 – (ESV) “My Father works **unceasingly**, and so do I,” stated when Christ was criticized for healing on a Sabbath. Yahweh had delegated His authority to Christ, hence, he was “Lord of the Sabbath.” The Sabbath was designed to bring benefits to man, so it was made for man, not man for it, to dominate him.

February 7

Exodus 15 – The song of Moses

In this chapter the sighs of Israel are turned into song. What better than singing songs of praise when God has wrought a great deliverance? This song, however, is not merely an expression of joy and triumph; it is prophetic in its teaching. It sweeps forward to a greater victory, a greater deliverance of the future, when the types and shadows of the past will merge into the glorious triumph of the Redeemed. This song of Moses forms the basis of many psalms and prophetic visions of future glory. It is cited time and again throughout Scripture. Not the least of these is the final reference in Rev. 15:3. Bro. Thomas wrote – “Such is the song of Moses, admirable for the boldness of its imagery, the sublimity of its sentiments, and the dignity of its style, which was sung by the Hebrew people standing upon the shore of Edom’s sea. They were now a people saved by Yahweh: a national salvation coeval with the signal overthrow of their enemies, and the destruction of their power. They had just put on Moses, having been all baptized in him in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:2). They are constituted the one body of Moses, and the Firstborn son of Yahweh (Ex. 4:22; Zech. 3:2; Jude 9), and when they arrived at Sinai, fifty days after the institution of the Passover, they became the Kingdom of the Deity (Ex. 19:5,6,8). It is a memorial of the nation’s deliverance from the Egyptians, and prophetic of its future salvation under the lead of the prophet like unto Moses, and the saints” (Eureka, Vol. 5, pg. 87).

It was sung on the equivalent of a Sunday morning, the morning in which the Apostles had cause to rejoice because they saw the risen Christ (Matt. 28:8-10). The Passover was slain on Wednesday (see comments on Ex. 16:1); on Thursday (15th Abib) the Israelites left Egypt for Succoth (Ex. 12:37); on Friday they moved on to Etham (Ex. 13:20); on Saturday they arrived at Pi-hahiroth (Ex. 14:1); on Sunday they moved across the Red Sea to the scene of rejoicing on the other side (Ex. 14:24). Intimately connected with the events of the Passover, the song is prophetic of redemption in Christ, and of the ultimate and complete deliverance he will accomplish through war against the enemy of sin and death (Egypt).

V.1 – “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Yahweh, and spake, saying, I will sing unto Yahweh, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea” – No Israelite sang in Egypt under the heavy burdens of their slavery. Only sighing and crying was heard (Ex. 2:23-24; 3:7-9; 6:5). Now there was rapturous joy. Moses vocalized the sentiments of his people. The words “triumphed gloriously” are expressed in the Hebrew by the repetition of the word *goah*, thus *goah goah*. The word signifies “to mount up, rise, be exalted.” In Scripture, “the horse and his rider” are used of those in control of warlike Gentile powers (Rev. 6:5; 19:18). The overthrow of Pharaoh and his army foreshadowed the overthrow by Christ in the future of all Gentile powers.

V.2-13 – “Yahweh is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him” – The song is a hymn of praise to Yahweh and gives an account of His deeds in the Red Sea as “a man of war.” There is graphic imagery of the wind likened to “the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea” (forming two walls). These walls came crashing down on Pharaoh’s hosts and “the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters,” securing the redemption of Israel who, had they been faithful, would have been recipients of an inheritance in the land – “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength **unto thy holy habitation**” (the Land of Promise). Sadly, very few adults reached it. The song then turns to the future.

V.14-21 – (LITV) “Peoples heard; they tremble; trembling seized the dwellers of Philistia” (*pelesheth* – rolling, that is, migratory) – Similarly, the leaders of Edom, Moab and Canaan trembled on hearing of this event (Josh. 2:9-11). When all the enemies of Israel are finally subdued, then “Yahweh, shall reign unto times age-abiding and beyond” (Rotherham).

V.22 – “they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went **three days** in the wilderness, and found no **water**” – It was not long before the rejoicing turned to murmuring. Three days journey from the Red Sea (baptism) points to the death of Christ and his time in the tomb. The wilderness of Shur (“wall” or “fortification”) was a barren place (see photo at right). The Egyptians called it, “the wilderness walled out,” and it is called the “wilderness of Etham” (“with them: their plowshare”) in Num. 33:8. It was the most difficult terrain Israel encountered in their wanderings. The lesson – early days in the Truth are difficult – we do not always appreciate our total dependence on the water of the Word, hence, 1 Pet. 2:2-3 – “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” The joys of baptism can soon be turned to bitterness unless we grow in faith through the power of the Word of God.



V.23-27 – “when they came to **Marah**, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah” – The name means “bitter”, from the root translated “bitter” in the same verse. This name occurs 5 times in the O.T. The root word *marah* first occurs in Gen. 27:34 of Esau’s “bitter” cry (cp. V.15 – “Edom”). It is used 6 times in Num. 5 in the law of jealousy, and by Agag – “Surely the **bitterness** of death is past” (1 Sam. 15:23). It is often used in the context of death. A cognate word *marar* is used in Ex. 1:14 – “And they made their lives **bitter** with hard bondage.” Another cognate word is used in Ex. 12:8. It is obvious this context is designed for all those who enter the waters of baptism (as Israel had done) and commence the journey towards the Promised Land in the wilderness of probation (cp. 1 Cor. 10:1-11 – “But, these things, by way of type, were happening unto them, and were written with a view to our admonition, unto whom, the ends of the ages, have reached along” (Rotherham for V.11). Do we baulk at the ‘bitterness’ of life in Christ? The operative principle is ‘suffering before glory’ seen in the transfiguration of Christ; i.e. the cross before the crown principle (1 Pet. 1:11 – “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” Hence, the cameo of Marah and then Elim!

V.24-25 – “the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” and “Yahweh shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet” – The word “tree” is *ets* (noun masculine) – tree, wood, timber, stock, plank, stalk, stick, gallows. It is translated “tree” in Esther 2:23, and then 8 more times in the book as “gallows.” Note in particular its use in Jer. 11 and 17 (context). Jer. 11:19 (Rotherham) – “But, I, was as a gentle lamb that is to be led to the slaughter,—and I knew not that against me, they had devised devices saying—Let us destroy **the tree** with its fruit Yea let us cut him off out of the land of the living, And, his name, shall be remembered no more!”

The word “cast” is used of Jonah being cast into the sea (Jonah 2:3), a type of Christ’s death (Matt. 12:40). It is not difficult therefore to relate this incident to the sacrifice of Christ. It was through his bitterness that sweetness was brought to our lives. There are 5 occurrences of the word “sweet” in the O.T. = grace (*mathaq* – to be or become sweet or pleasing. It is used of “sweet counsel” in Ps. 55:14).

“there he made for them a statute (*chōq* – statute, ordinance, something prescribed, like the Passover – Ex. 12:24) and an ordinance (*mishpat* – judgement, ordinance) and there he proved (*nasah* – to test, try, prove, assay, put to the proof or test. The first and previous occ. Is Gen. 22:1 of Abraham sacrificing Isaac) them” – This incident at Marah laid down principles for all subsequent generations of the “Israel of God” to govern their lives in ‘the wilderness of life.’ But we must listen carefully.

V.26 – “If thou wilt **diligently hearken** to the voice of Yahweh thy God...I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Yahweh that healeth thee” – The words “diligently hearken” are *shama shama* – to hear, listen to, obey (Deut. 6:4). See a similar construction in Isa. 55:2. The word “healeth” is *rāphah* – to heal, make healthful. It is used in Deut. 28:27 of the diseases of Egypt, and of redemption (Isa. 57:18-19; Jer. 17:14; 30:17; 33:6). Significantly, it is used of Christ’s sacrifice in Isa. 53:5.

V.27 – “And they came to **Elim** ('éylim – palms), where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters” – Elim was the 7th station out of Egypt (commencing with Rameses – see Num. 33) and points to the Millennium. The scene here of 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees provided a vision of the Kingdom when all nations will draw from the wells of Israel (Isa. 12:3 – “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”).

The name Elim is derived from the same root as the Divine title **EI** (Ail). The root word is 'ayil – strength; hence anything strong; a chief; also a ram (from his strength); a post (as a strong support); an oak or other strong tree. It is translated “mighty men” in Ex. 15:15; and “mighty” in 2 Kings 24:15 and Ezek. 17:13. This then was the place of “mighty ones” (Elohim). If we “hearken diligently” to God’s statutes and look to the one represented by the tree (doubtless a palm tree – the symbol for a righteous man – Ps. 92:12) we will find a place in the Kingdom of God.

Israel and the Nations	
The Jew first	Then the Gentiles
12 = Israel	70 = Gentiles
Ex.15:27 – Elim	
12 wells of water	70 palm trees
Luke 9:1	Luke 10:1
12 disciples sent to preach	70 disciples sent to preach
Rev. 7:4-8	Rev. 7:9
Perfect Israel - The Redeemed	Redeemed out of all nations

Psalm 69 – The sufferings of Messiah

V.1 – **To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Psalm of David.** Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 68. Ps. 69 is a Messianic psalm. The background would appear to be the time of Absalom’s rebellion after a long period of illness by David in the wake of his sin with Bathsheba. Though he had been forgiven, he suffered dreadful consequences and almost died (Ps. 41:3-5), but his enemies did not forgive him (particularly Ahithophel). The members of his family (like Absalom) took advantage of his sickness. All of this became important background for a Messianic psalm dealing with Christ’s rejection by his own family (V.8 – “I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children”), and the murderous machinations of his enemies (V.4 – “they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are

mighty"). David is speaking for Messiah (1 Pet. 1:10-11; 2:10-22) and likens the hatred of his enemies, including that of his family (1 Sam. 17:28) to waters and mire rising to drown him. This is explained in V.14 – “Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that **hate** me, and out of the deep waters.” Like Messiah, David was alone, surrounded by enemies – “Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (V.20). But in fact, he was not alone, “For Yahweh heareth the poor, and despiseth not his **prisoners**” (V.33). We are all “prisoners” of Christ if we are fully committed to him. Paul calls himself “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” on five occasions (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 2 Tim. 1:8; Philemon 1:1,9).

The importance of Ps. 69 to Christ

There are 6 citations and direct references to Ps. 69 in the N.T. They are: V.4 – “They that hate me without a cause” (John 15:25); V.9a – “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:17); V.9b – “the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me” (Rom. 15:3); V.21 – “in my thirst” (John 19:29); V.22-23 – “Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them” (Rom. 11:9-10); V.25 – “Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents” (Acts 1:20). If each citation is considered in order, it becomes evident that the hatred experienced by David as the forerunner of Christ was finally overcome. In the Mark reading for today, Christ's own family accused him of insanity (Mark 3:21), and sought to interrupt his mission (Mark 3:31; cp. Ps. 69:8). However, ultimately, they are found in the upper room as devoted followers of the risen Lord – Acts 1:14 (among the 120); hence, the citation from Ps. 69:25 in V.20. Careful examination of each citation reveals the progression. It is hard to overstate how important this psalm was to our Lord.

Bro. Roberts made the following comment on Ps. 69:5:

“My sins are not hid from Thee”

In the Psalms the sufferings of Christ are vividly manifest, as well as “the glory that should follow”. Those sufferings are not to be confined to the closing scene of his tribulation ... We must consider how he felt and what he thought in relation to his whole surroundings. The opportunity of doing this is abundantly afforded in the Psalms, and more particularly in Psalm 69, to which Paul refers— “Christ pleased not himself, but as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on me” (Romans 15:2).

Turning to that Psalm, we are presented with the inner and personal experience of Christ in a form not accessible in the Gospel narratives. Verse 5— “O Lord, Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from Thee”.

The application of this to Christ is only intelligible on the principle that he partook of the common nature of our uncleanness—flesh of Adamic stock—in which, as Paul says, there “dwelleth no good thing” (Rom. 7:18); a nature the burdensome of which arises from its native tendencies to foolishness and sin.

This burden is felt in proportion as higher things are appreciated. Christ knew as no man can know, the gloriousness, spotlessness, and spontaneous holiness of the Spirit nature ... True, Christ sustained the burden; he carried the load without stumbling ... Still, the burden was there, and his consciousness of it finds expression in the words under consideration.

Bro. Robert Roberts (Extract from The Atonement pg. 6)

Mark 3

V.1 – The synagogue where the man with the withered hand was healed is not named in any of the three records, and this may be deliberate, for the man who was commanded to “stand forth in the midst” (Luke 6:8) was a microcosm of all Judaisers who frequented the synagogues. His withered hand was representative of their shrivelled minds.

The healing of the man with a **withered hand** standing in the middle of a synagogue is another enacted parable where the actions are just as important as the words. The command to “Rise up, and stand forth in the midst” as a representative of all in that place indicates that their mind and thinking was of the withered/closed hand variety (1 Kings 13:4). The imagery is drawn from Isa. 58 where the principle of the Sabbath is beautifully portrayed. The law keepers who sat together on Sabbaths fasting had a clenched fist attitude (Isa. 58:4-5). The fast that Yahweh desired was the **open hand** that loosed the bands of wickedness; unloaded heavy burdens; and let the oppressed go free; broke every yoke; dealt bread to the hungry; guided the poor to a safe place and covered the unclothed (Isa. 58:6-7). These were things that could only be done with the **open hand** – the symbol for the Sabbath, and the way of Yahweh Himself (Isa. 59:1) – “Behold, Yahweh’s hand is not **shortened** (by being clenched), that it cannot save.” Herein lay the huge gap between Judaistic law keepers and the presumptive Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Angrily, Jesus looked around to see if there was any hope that these ‘clenched fist’ Judaisers might hearken, but seeing only a cold hatred, he commanded the man with the withered hand to “Stretch forth thine hand,” and when he did “his hand was restored whole as the other.” If only these closed minded law keepers would open their ‘Sabbath hand’ and seek to cure like Christ, and not seek to kill as they set out to do to him (V.6).

V.7-21 – Huge crowds began to follow Jesus as he returned from Jerusalem to the Galilee region. Both Jews and Gentiles swarmed to him seeking cures for their various ailments. It became necessary for the Lord to take to the water in a boat lest he be overwhelmed by the crowd. He took the opportunity to ascend a mountain with his invited disciples and “ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach” and to heal. Twelve disciples were made apostles (‘one sent’) and are named. Descending to a house in the hope of finding sustenance “the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread,” and if that were not sufficient inconvenience, his own relatives arrived “to seize him, for they were saying, ‘He is out of his mind.’” (ESV).

V. 22-30 – There was no escape, as next “scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.” This was blasphemy of the power of the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness. Simple logic was applied – “How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” This led to a condemnation from which there is no escape – “he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.”

V.31-35 – The Lord’s relatives had been unsuccessful in restraining him (V.21), so now his close family members turned up to make an effort to curb the embarrassment and possibly the persecution that was now accruing to them because of his impact on so many people that had stirred up the Scribes and Pharisees. We know from the N.T. epistles that Jewish converts that came into Christ were persecuted by fellow Jews for having forsaken Judaism (Heb. 12:2-6; 10:33; Gal. 5:6-12). There had to be strong reasons why the Lord’s family sought to restrain him. His response would have sent them home crestfallen and chastened – “Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him,

and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." This was confirmation of what he taught consistently about family relationships getting in the way of following him (Matt. 10:34-39; Mark 13:12; Luke 21:16).

February 8

Exodus 16

V.1 – "And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin ("thorn" or "bramble"), which is between Elim and Sinai ("thorn bush"), on the **fifteenth day of the second month** after their departing out of the land of Egypt" – Careful analysis of this verse reveals a number of important considerations. Firstly, the 15th day of the second month (Iyar) was a Sabbath because the collection of manna for 6 days began the next day. The manna we know was a type of Christ (the Word made flesh – John 6:32-35). Working backwards, it can be shown that the 14th of Abib was a Wednesday (there being 30 days in a Jewish month). The pattern was set. Christ, the Passover lamb was crucified on a Wednesday, interred by 6 pm (the beginning of a Jewish day), and raised exactly three days and nights later at 6 pm on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:40), and revealed to his disciples on the 1st day of the week.

V.2-3 – "the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness" – Israel murmured 13 times in the wilderness. Lack of food was the cause of the murmuring this time. In Egypt, though enslaved, they enjoyed the bounty of the Nile Delta with its alluvial soil and plentiful water to grow all kinds of foods. Here there was nothing. Their complaint placed them firmly in the "stony ground" category of the Parable of the Sower – "there arising, tribulation or persecution because of the word, straightway, he findeth cause of stumbling" (Rotherham for Matt. 13:21) – (RV for V.3) "Would that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt." They wanted to go back to Egypt already, one month into their probation, for they missed "the flesh pots" where they ate "bread to the full." Where was their faith in God?

V.4-5 – "I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a **certain rate** every day" – The Hebrew word *dabar* occurs in Ex. 16 seven times (the Spirit number) as a noun and a verb. The first occurrence is in V.4 translated in the KJV "a certain rate" (margin "portion"). *Dabar* is the Hebrew word that Yahweh uses for His own Word. It could, therefore, be rendered as "the people shall go out and gather the Word for the day" (see margin). That is what the Spirit intended at the spiritual level as many subsequent Scriptures show (e.g. John 6). *Dabar* can be found again in V.10 "spake"; V.12 "speak"; V.16 "thing"; V.23 "said"; V.32 "thing". Each "man" (i.e. the head of the family) was responsible for ensuring his family had sufficient manna for the day (V.16). The phrase "for every man" in V.16 employs the word *gulgoleth* – skull, head. The manna was intended for every 'head', just like the Word of God. The manna melted in the morning sun. Perhaps God was indicating to His people the value of early gathering and ingestion of Divinely provided sustenance. Certainly, the purpose of the bread from heaven was to **prove** them, whether they will walk in my law, or no" (see Deut. 8:1-3). The 15th was a Sabbath, so the collection would begin the next day. However, the next Sabbath they would rest – "on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily." This proved a test for some.

There were three types of manna – (1) one that lasted one day, representing Christ's mortality; (2) one that lasted over the 'weekend', representing Christ's preservation in the tomb; (3) one

that never corrupted, representing Christ's immortality to be granted to his faithful servants in due course (Rev. 2:17).

V.6-10 – “At even, then ye shall know that Yahweh hath brought you out from the land of Egypt” – Moses called the congregation together to rebuke them, for “your murmurings are not against us, but against Yahweh” and He would provide flesh that night, and in the morning bread. When Aaron called them near “they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Yahweh appeared in the cloud,” a sign of God’s anger.

V.11-21 – “at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host” – So they had meat in the evening and bread in the morning, for “the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.” It was small for a purpose. It required diligence and persistence, just as is required if the Word of God is to be ‘gathered’ by careful reading. Many were mystified – “What is that? For they knew not what ‘that’ was” (Rotherham for V.15), just as when Christ came as “the bread from heaven” they knew him not (John 6:32-36).

“And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less,” but “he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack” (i.e. they shared it – 2 Cor. 8:14-15). However, carelessness or curiosity caused some of them to leave of “it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.” The perversity of human nature is evident throughout the record.

V.22-30 – “on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread” – To their amazement the bread gathered on the 6th day when kept overnight “did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.” But true to the perversity of the disobedient “there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none,” which again stirred the anger of God – “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?” The simple lesson from these failures is that God just wants obedience, an acceptance of what He says, without questioning or doubt. History has shown that many are not prepared to offer that to Him. It is the difference between life and death (Deut. 30:19).

V.31-36 – “the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey” – They soon tired of it compared to “the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick” of Egypt. In Ps. 78:23-25, the psalmist wrote that God “rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels’ food (“food of the mighty” – Rotherham): he sent them meat to the full,” but they never perceived it to be their “daily bread” as the Word of God is to us. They were suffered to hunger for the food of Egypt to test whether they perceived that the Word of God was the key to entering the Land of Promise (V.35; Deut. 8:1-3).

“Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; **that they may see the bread** wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness” – Herein lay the key to eternal life which the manna in the “golden pot” (Heb. 9:4) represented. It depends on **faith**. Once the pot was placed in the Ark (later on), no one could **see** it. You had to believe the testimony that it was there. “Now faith is a well-grounded assurance of that for which we hope, and a conviction of the reality of things which we do not see” (Weymouth for Heb. 11:1).

Manna as a type of Christ

- ❖ **Flesh of quail was given before the manna (Ex. 16:12-13)** – Christ said his flesh was the substance of the bread he gave for the life of the world – **John 6:51**.
- ❖ **Manna appeared after the dew (symbol of resurrection – Ps. 110:3; Isa. 26:19)** – Christ rose “early in the morning” as the firstfruits of them that slept – **John 6:54-58,62**.

Psalm 70 – Let God be magnified

V.1 – “**To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.** Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O Yahweh” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 69. Psalm 70 is closely linked with Psalms 35 and 40 (Ps. 40:13-17 are almost a mirror), and it is apparent that the background is the same – the awful events surrounding Absalom’s rebellion. The urgency of the request “make haste to help me,” repeated in V.5, suggests it was written at the height of the crisis.

V.2-3 – “Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul” – This is clearly a reference to the conspirators who surrounded Absalom, such as Ahithophel who counselled that David be pursued and killed (2 Sam. 17:1-2). As the superscription says, David was bringing to remembrance the perfidy of those who sought his life, but he was also magnifying the God who saved him.

V.4-5 – “let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified” – Consistent with the key message of Ps. 50:15 – “call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,” David gave honour to Yahweh in the hour of need.

Psalm 71 – Yahweh is a Rock and a Fortress

V.1 – “In thee, O Yahweh, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion” – The lack of a subscription to Ps. 70 and a superscription to Ps. 71 may suggest that the latter is a continuation of the former, if they are not in fact one psalm. Certainly, Ps. 71 continues the themes of Ps. 70 but takes David into the later years of his life – “Cast me not off in the time of **old age**; forsake me not when my **strength faileth**” (V.9), and “Now also when I am **old and grayheaded**” (V.18). From this vantage point he looked back at his early days as a newborn (V.6), and as a youth (V.5 – “thou art my trust from my youth”) recalling how God had educated and guided him – “O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works” (V.17). Everything he valued in life had come from his God – “Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!” and he wanted others to know it before he died – “until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.”

The Messianic tenor of this psalm is obvious. The strength that Christ would have derived from it cannot be overstated. Such passages as, “Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and **shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth**. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and **comfort me on every side**” (V.20-21) would have meant more to him than they did to David, for he would be first to be delivered from his enemies, and from the power of the grave – “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed” (V.23).

The writer on Psalms 70 and 71 in the book “Psalms” (CSSS) makes the following comments that beautifully sum up the themes of these two related psalms – We therefore have this introductory psalm before us (Ps. 70) which leads into the thoughts of an old and wise king, reflecting on God’s mercy throughout his life (Ps. 71). How wonderful, too, that this most humiliating and lonely period of David’s life, the most eloquent prophecies of Messiah’s sufferings and glory are given by the Spirit. This is a profound and wonderful consideration: behold the beauty of our Father’s mind. When the nation of Israel least valued its Divinely-provided king, when even the capital was buzzing with insurrection and strife, when even his son and kinsmen were plotting his death, then it was Yahweh that rewarded David with the most precious secrets, the most intimate thoughts of Messiah upon the tree of humiliation and

sacrifice. Here is a profound lesson. We do all we can to avoid suffering but for those who are exercised thereby, great spiritual blessing and insights are realized in the experiences. The spirit of Christ is running with David in these things.

Mark 4 – Sowing and reaping

This chapter is companion to Matt. 13 and Luke 8. The Lord begins to teach in parables. He did this for a reason, as he declared in V.10-12. This is antithetical to common perceptions of Christ's mission – doesn't he want everyone to understand? Christ used parables to conceal his teaching from the unhearing and the unwilling. This teaches an important lesson. There must be a desire to learn and to want to understand. Self-satisfaction seen in the Judaistic Jews of his day who thought they already had salvation by works of law blinded them to their real and urgent need. Hence, in Mark 4 there is emphasis on the importance of "**hearing**" – see verses 9,12,23-24,33. It will be noted that the phrase "he that hath ears to hear, let him hear" is used by Christ in his letters to the seven ecclesiastical assemblies of Asia (Rev. 2 & 3). Hence, the parables of the Sower and the farmer in Mark 4. The latter only occurs in Mark. It is an extension of the well-known parable of the Sower to emphasize the critical importance of hearing and the principle of granting to the diligent an abundant increase (V.24-25). The farmer does all he can do – ploughs in winter; sows the seed in spring; protects the new growth from predators by rising at night; waits patiently for the rain; etc. All this is tiring, so he must "sleep" (V.27). It has been shown by modern research that where there has been diligent attention paid to learning during the day, that learning is consolidated in the brain during sleep. Such is the testimony of Ps. 127:1-2 – Yahweh builds the spiritual 'house' – "For so he giveth his beloved sleep" is better and more accurately translated, "He giveth His beloved **while they are sleeping.**" That is the Divine blessing and increase for diligence in spiritual things. Never underestimate the value of Bible study.

V.35-41 – This bracket of verses is an important lead into Mark 5. The events of the previous 24 hours had completely exhausted the Lord and he requested, "Let us pass over unto the other side." The disciples dismissed the multitude and "they took him **even as he was** in the ship" (ESV "just as he was") indicating how exhausted he really was. Even then, he could not escape the crowd – "other boats were with him" but he was fast asleep. A violent Galilean storm whipped up "and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full" (not good for the accompanying boats). Self-preservation can be foolish at times – "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Of course he cared, so Ps. 65:5-7 comes into view – "Which **stilleth the noise of the seas**, the noise of their waves, and **the tumult of the peoples**," so he "rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." This is the introduction for three 'storms' in chapter 5 – the storm in the brain of Legion; the storm around the 'hem healer' and the one in Jairus's house. Our hymn rightly says, "With Christ in the vessel, we smile at the storm" (Hymn 340).

February 9

Exodus 17 – War with Amalek

From Alush (where the manna was given) to Rephidim required a steady climb towards Mt Sinai through harsh terrain consisting of wadis and washouts from occasional storms. It is a dry and barren landscape with many places for lurking Amalekites to hide and cut off the stragglers behind the main host (Deut. 25:17-18 – "Remember what **Amalek** did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were **feeble** behind thee, when thou wast **faint** and **weary**"). Amalek was waiting for them at Rephidim. Some Israelites had perished on the way.

V.1 – “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin...and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink” – The principle of Ex. 16:32 (‘seeing the invisible’) was now put to the test. There was water at Rephidim, for palm trees do not grow without it, but it was subterranean. Faith was required to see the invisible, but discontent and murmuring emerged – “the people did chide (*rîyb* – to toss, i.e. grapple; to wrangle) with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink.”

An oasis without visible water!

Heb. 11:27 – By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.



Rephidim means “ballusters” (a railing as spread along). Gesenius says “props” or “supports.” The traditional site is undoubtedly correct, both from Scriptural testimony and from those who have been there. If you visit, it is exactly as described. The recent placing of Rephidim and Mt Sinai in the Saudi Arabian Peninsula does not stand up to careful scrutiny. Wikipedia adds, “More recent scholarship identifies Rephidim with Wadi Refayid in the southwest Sinai.”

V.7 states the issue of this chapter – “Is Yahweh among us, or not?” Just as Israel were to “see” the hidden manna by the eye of faith (Ex. 16:32-34) they now needed to have faith in the invisible water that was clearly there under the surface, for Rephidim was an oasis with trees, but without visible water. Faith was necessary to see the invisible! (Heb. 11:27). It is no different for us.

V.6 – “Behold, I (Yahweh) will stand before thee there upon the **rock** in **Horeb**” – The Hebrew word “rock” is *tzur* – a large rock or boulder. Horeb means “desert” (17 occs. O.T.). Strong says, desolate; from root *chareb*; to parch (through drought), that is, (by analogy) to desolate, destroy, kill. This was Israel’s charge against Moses in V.3. Horeb was called “the mountain of God” in Ex. 3:1 (1st occ.). Yahweh was represented by Michael the archangel (Isa. 63:9) – “In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them.” Moses referred to this incident in Deut. 33:8 (see comments on May 16). The rock was a type of Christ in his **mortality**, and Moses struck this rock with the serpent rod portraying the crucifixion of Christ. Paul confirmed this fact in 1 Cor. 10:4 – “that Rock was Christ.”

The rod had been cast to the ground and became a serpent; and was therefore related to the earth and sin (Ex. 4:2-4). It is called “the rod of God” (Ex. 4:20; 17:9) and was used in 5 of the Ten Plagues on Egypt. It represented Divine authority to bring affliction on flesh. The Divine commentary on this event is extensive: Ps. 78:15-16 – “He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.” Ps. 105:41 – “He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.” Ps. 114:8 – “Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.” Isa. 48:21 – “And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the

waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out."

Its relationship to Christ as the source of the water of life is made clear by Paul in 1 Cor. 10:4 and is alluded to by Christ himself in John 7:37-41 – "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

V.7 – "he called the name of the place **Massah**, and **Meribah**, because of the chiding (*riyb* – strife, controversy, dispute) of the children of Israel, and because they tempted (*nasah* – to test, try, prove, tempt) Yahweh" – "Massah" means "temptation," from the root *massah* – testing, proving, trial (5 occs. O.T. – see use Ps. 95:8) and the name occurs 4 times in the O.T. Meribah means "strife" or "contention" (the name occs. 8 times O.T.). There are two places called "Meribah" that are related. The other is in Num. 20:13,24 where Moses mistakenly struck another (different) rock that represented Christ in his **immortality** as a mediator. The following slides explain, though fuller comment will be reserved until Numbers 20 comes along.

Two rods	
Ex. 17 – Rephidim	Num. 20 – Meribah
V.5 – "take with thee the elders of Israel" – Rep. the leaders of the Mosaic system (Matt. 23:2). "thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river" – The serpent rod. Instrument of divine authority to afflict flesh in the hands of Moses the lawgiver. Symbol for the cross of Christ.	V.8 – "Aaron thy brother" – Typical of Christ the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 5:4-6). "Take the rod" – Aaron's rod that budded "laid up before Yahweh" in the Ark (Num. 17:7). Represents Christ (Isa. 11:1), once dead, but now resurrected to an everlasting priesthood (Heb. 10:11-14; 7:23-25).
Two rocks	
Ex. 17 – Rephidim	Num. 20 – Meribah
V.6 – "smite the rock" – Speaks typically of Christ's crucifixion. He was "smitten for our iniquities" (Isa. 53:4-6). "the rock" – <i>tzur</i> – a huge rock, a boulder being set in the earth providing shelter and shade for man and beast. A divine title (Deut. 32:4,15,18). A type of Christ's mortality.	V.8 – "speak ye unto the rock" – We cannot crucify Christ afresh (Heb. 6:6). Once smitten, he must now be spoken to. "the rock" – <i>selah</i> – a cliff or crag; high up and inaccessible. Is used in the sense of a fortress (see Ps. 31:3; Song 2:14; 2 Sam. 22:2). Represents the immortal Christ as High Priest of his people.

V.8-16 – "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim" – It stands to reason that Amalek who was lurking in the region would seek to steal the water supplied at Rephidim from Israel. Water was a scarce commodity in this harsh and barren wilderness (Deut. 8:15).

Amalek first appears as a nation in Ex. 17 (Gen. 14:7 notwithstanding). The name occurs 7 times in the chapter and signifies complete manifestation in relation to a covenant, and that covenant is Gen. 3:15. Note that the nation is called "Amalek" (as though one man) not "Amalekites," and therefore represents one in a multitude – cp. Gen. 3:15. The name "Amalek" occurs 24

times; and "Amalekite/s" occurs 27 times in the O.T. (51 in aggregate). Amalek means "warlike" (Young's Concordance); or "A strangler of the people" (The Hebrew & English Bible Students Concordance). It is clear from the language of V.16 that Amalek is a type of the **serpent** in political and religious manifestation. This is why in Rev. 20:8 we read of "Gog and Magog" leading the final rebellion against God in the chapter that deals with the final destruction of "the **old serpent**" (the one of Gen. 3:15). In Num. 24:7 the Septuagint translates "Agag" as "Gog" and Balaam's prophecies go on to prophecy the ultimate destruction of Amalek in V.20 –



"And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations (i.e. to war against Israel); but his latter end shall be that **he perish for ever.**"

V.9 – "Moses said unto **Joshua**, Choose us out men (*ish*), and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand" – This is the first mention of Joshua in Scripture. He appears seemingly out of nowhere. His name means "Yah saves" or "Yahweh shall save." His name occurs 4 times in the chapter (the number of righteousness, God manifestation, and a new creation). We read in Ex. 33:11 he was the "son (*ben*) of Nun" = "family builder of perpetuity" (Root – to resprout, that is, propagate by shoots; figuratively, to be perpetual). Accordingly, Joshua is clearly a type of Christ who by a figurative resurrection was to become the Saviour of Israel. In the type, Yahshua was to choose out 'great men' (*ish*) in the war against the serpent. We should see ourselves in this picture – "So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek."

Jewish tradition says that Joshua was released from slavery as a underground miner in the turquoise mines at Dophkah when Israel arrived there (Dophkah means to knock; by analogy to press severely: beat, knock, overdrive – Gen. 33:13). Egypt sent political prisoners to work in the mines; noblemen, slaves, innocent and guilty men, women and children were driven underground. 750 soldiers guarded the entrances to the mines; there was no way to escape except by death. Local inscriptions tell how the work was suddenly stopped about the time of the Exodus. At the top of the mountain, above the mines, was a temple of Hathor the cow goddess, said to be the mother of Egypt. She was called the Turquoise Queen and the well-preserved remains of her temple can be visited today. If this is so, it explains why Joshua who plays such an important part in what follows, suddenly emerges from nowhere. At Dophkah, Israel was just a week or two from arriving at Rephidim where he played a crucial role in the Divine scheme.

"Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his **hand**, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his **hand**, Amalek prevailed" – This is a graphic portrayal of Christ's struggle with the serpent power within himself. Aaron was the High Priest elect, but not yet appointed (Ex. 28:1). He is a type of Christ as high priest in preparation. Moses, the man of God, Israel's law-giver was the forerunner of Christ who was to be a prophet like unto Moses (Deut. 18:18). Hur means "white linen" (Rev. 19:8) of the tribe of Judah (Ex. 31:2), the royal tribe. He was a type of Christ as the son of David and King-elect. Thus, these three represent Christ during his mortal ministry. As Joshua fought Amalek on the plain below, the battle waxed and waned. As Moses held up the serpent rod which represented the cross of crucifixion (as seen in the striking of the rock), his arm grew tired. Notice, he was holding the rod with one hand, and doubtless swapping it to the other when he tired. Each time he rested his arm, Amalek began to prevail, but when he raised it again, Joshua prevailed. In the Garden of Gethsemane ("an oil press") the Lord struggled with the natural inclinations of his flesh. Three times he pleaded to his Father whether there may be another way, but each time the oil of the Word (pressed out in anguish) prevailed – "Not my will, but thine be done." Then came steadfast resolution as occurred on the hill at Rephidim. The Apostle says, "**for the joy that was set before him** (he) endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Christ looked into the future. He saw himself at the right hand of his Father as a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:1,4), and so steadfastly endured the sufferings of the cross. Hence, "Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a **stone** (*eben* – family building stone), and put it under him, and he sat thereon (stable and rock-like); and Aaron (high-priest elect) and Hur (prince of Judah) stayed up his **hands**, the one on the one side, and the

other on the other side; and his **hands** were steady until the going down of the sun" (death). This vision in the mind of Christ brought him victory.

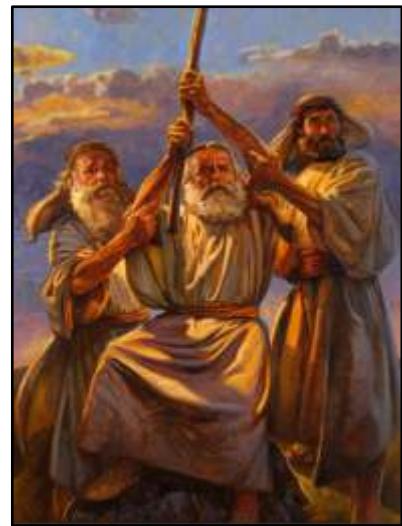
Note that Moses' "hands" (plural) were grasping the serpent rod that represented the cross of crucifixion (see illustration at right). The imagery is of Christ with hands nailed to the tree. While the vision presented by the three men on the hill represented what was going on in the mind of Christ as he hung on the cross, Joshua (Christ) on the plain below was in mortal conflict with Amalek (the serpent), and looked up at Moses' hands being held steady. Amalek no longer prevailed and "Joshua **discomfited** (*châlash* – to prostrate; by implication to overthrow) Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (the Word of God – Heb. 4:12). Paul expounded upon the fulfillment of Gen. 3:15 in Col.

2:14-15 where he says of Christ's triumph over the "principalities and powers (the seed of the serpent), he made a shew of them publicly, triumphing over them **in himself**" (*en auto*), by destroying the 'serpent' (their problem) within.

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and **rehearse it in the ears of Joshua**: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" – Why would Joshua need the battle of that day to be rehearsed in his ears? He didn't. It wasn't written for him. It was written for another Yahshua, our Lord Jesus Christ. Can you imagine what this record meant to him as he rehearsed these things in his mind preparing for the cross. He understood it was all about his role as "the seed of the woman" of Gen. 3:15, and that he would in his crucifixion crush the serpent's head. That is why Yahweh makes the declaration, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." This was the first step.

"Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Yahweh-nissi: for he said, Because Yahweh hath sworn that Yahweh will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" – Yahweh swore that oath back in Gen. 3:15 (LITV) "I will put **enmity** between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; **He** will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." That would be achieved on the cross, hence, an altar called Yahweh-nissi. The word *nissi* is the Hebrew *nes* signifying a flag; also a sail; by imp. a flagstaff (Strong). Gesenius says "something lifted up, a token to be seen far off." It is used of a banner raised in war to gather the people to a place of assembly; a column or lofty pole; a sign by which anyone is warned. It first occurs in Ex. 17:15, but the next occurrence is in Num. 21:8,9 where "Moses made a **serpent** of brass, and put it upon a **pole**" (*nes*) which we know represented the crucifixion of Christ – "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3:14). A paraphrase of this name might be, "He who will be manifested (by sacrifice) on a pole to assemble his people for warfare." The following is a succinct summary of the principles of this record.

"The significance of God's quarrel with Amalek was for all time – 'Write this for a memorial in a book'; but its effect would be the obliteration of Amalek as such – 'Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven'. It was a poor Israelite who failed to see more than the obvious literal meaning in this contrast and missed the symbolical sense of the term 'Amalek'. The law here, if only he could see it, was presenting a challenge to him to wage a relentless war against sin in himself and all about him, a war so relentless that sin would in the process be annihilated." (Bro. W.F. Barling – Law and Grace)



Exodus 18 – A glimpse of a Melchizedek priest

V.1-12 – “When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt” he “came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God” – Jethro’s name means “his excellence” and he was a priest. In the type he represents a priest after the order of Melchizedek because he is a mentor and guide to Moses and preserved his family while Moses was on a mission of redemption for Israel. He played the part for Moses that Melchizedek did for Abraham, for Moses’ did “obeisance” (*shâchâh* – to prostrate; especially reflexively in homage to royalty or God) to Jethro as though he were royalty (like Melchizedek, a king-priest) whom Abraham acknowledged as greater than himself (Heb. 7:6-7). He also rejoiced at the report of the triumph over “Pharaoh and....the Egyptians for Israel’s sake” (V.8-10), and they shared a fellowship meal as Melchizedek and Abraham had done (V.12; Gen. 14:18). The tent (*ohel*) in which they met was the one in which Yahweh spoke face to face with Moses through Michael the archangel (Ex. 33:11). This encounter clearly had roots in Gen. 14.

V.13-27 – “And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening....when Moses’ father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone?” – Jethro immediately grasped the problem confronting Moses – “Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.” Moses was a mortal man, and this kind of burden could not be carried for very long without him collapsing under its weight. Wise counsel prevailed. Moses would judge the most important matters – “Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God,” but there would be an echelon of reliable and honest men appointed to judge all other everyday matters on his behalf. Having made a really valuable contribution to the organisation of Israel, “Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.” Jethro had the same kind of influence on Moses as Melchizedek had on Abraham.

Psalm 72 – Peace through righteousness in the Kingdom

V.1 – **A Psalm for Solomon.** Give the king thy judgements, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king’s son” – David was the author of this psalm (V.20 – “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended”). It was clearly written at the end of David’s life, most likely at the time when Solomon was coronated a second time (1 Chron. 28 and 29). David had been too unwell at the time of Adonijah’s coup to seize the throne, and Solomon had been hurriedly crowned as king in his stead. He recovered sufficiently to call a huge assembly of the nation and crown Solomon a second time. While David saw in Solomon a type of the son Yahweh had promised him (1 Chron. 28:6-7), he knew its actual fulfillment was a long way into the future (2 Sam. 7:19; 1 Chron. 17:17). Under inspiration, David speaks of things that Solomon would accomplish as a type of Christ (and there were quite a number, for he was a type of Christ), but given Solomon’s eventual failure, the sentiments of the psalm can only rightly be applied to our Lord Jesus Christ.

The psalm can be summarized as follows: V.1-7 – Christ’s righteous reign will refresh the earth with peace; V.8-11 – Christ’s dominion will extend to all lands and involve all peoples; V.12-14 – Christ will plead the cause of the poor and needy; V.15-16 – The prosperity of Christ’s reign will yield prayer and praise; V.17 – All nations will be blessed in Christ’s name; V.18-20 – There will be universal praise to God, for the knowledge of His glory will fill the earth.

The key themes and principles of the psalm are; (1) that peace can only come by righteousness – “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness

quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17), for "There is no peace, saith Yahweh, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22); (2) Dominion will only come by enforcement to humble proud nations – "he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:4); (3) True change can only come by education in the Word of God – "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth," (cp. Deut. 32:1-2), so that after the scything judgements of the hail (= saints – Rev. 16:21) on "all flesh" (Isa. 40:6), the saints will educate the nations in God's ways – "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21); (4) The principle of Gen. 9:5 will apply – "surely your blood of your lives will I require," for Christ "shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their **blood** be in his sight" – ordinary and powerless folk (the common man) will no longer be pawns and cannon fodder for rapacious tyrants like those who rule in many countries today. The world desperately needs David's greater son.

Mark 5 – Three groups Christ came to save

The three classes of humanity that Jesus (Yahshua – Yahweh's salvation) came to save appear in Mark 5. There is Legion (a Roman legion had 6,000 men = the human race). He may have been a Jew, but his name, place of abode (Decapolis with its 10 Gentile towns) in Galilee ("of the nations" – Isa. 9:1), and his circumstances (living among the dead – Eph. 2:1), all point to Gentiles for whom Mark is writing. He was afflicted with a medical condition called Cysticercosis – the infestation of the human brain by the larval stage of the tapeworm whose host is normally swine. The body is walled off against these larvae that have been ingested via their eggs finding their way into the food chain. The brain however cannot repel them. As they gnaw away at the arteries and capillaries in the brain, it responds by excreting a fluid which fills the cranium and creates a pressure that results in wild maniacal outbursts like those evident in Legion's behaviour. The Jews had tried to chain him, as they had tried to chain Gentiles with the Law of Moses. It could not hold his wild outbursts (law highlights sin, it doesn't curb it – Rom. 7:8-11). The only cure was to treat the cause – the 'swine' in mankind (2 Pet. 2:22). This was sent to where it belonged; 2,000 swine drowned, pointing to 2,000 years of Gentiles baptized that they might "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." Legion was naked when he came to Christ (Luke 8:27), but is found in his right mind (2 Tim. 1:7), and clothed with a garment given him by the Lord (just as he has given us one), and who tells him to go home to his 'friends' (like us) and tell them all about Yahweh's salvation. That has been going on now for two millennia. It is significant that this incident is followed by the Lord passing over the sea ("Galilee of the nations") to the more Jewish side of the lake, but "he was nigh unto the sea" – the Gentiles would not be forgotten. The time for the Gospel to reach them was at hand.

V.22-43 – Two women come into view representing the two classes within Israel that the Lord came to save. A woman with an issue of blood (unclean under the Law) had wasted her substance on ineffective doctors while being kept out of the synagogue (a place of refuge) by Jairus, one of its rulers. He had a 12-year-old daughter grievously sick who had grown up watching her father exclude this pitiful woman. These two represent the two classes in Israel (12 being the number of Israel) that Christ came to save. Sinners and tax gatherers represented by the woman; the religious class living under law by Jairus' daughter. Jairus, desperate, put his trust in Jesus, who is delayed by the woman, consistent with his normal focus on the outcasts of Israel who saw their need for his healing power. This woman was healed through faith in his word (represented by the hem of his garment – Num. 15:37-39), but Jairus' daughter (under law) died (law cannot save). The Lord encouraged Jairus to "just go on believing" as the Greek for verse 36 has it. Only 6 living beings were permitted into the 'tomb' of Jairus' house,

with one dead = 7 = covenant and Spirit. 5 with faith (looking for grace), one with healing power, one dead. Then the incredible happened – “Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.” The parents clutching their living daughter were instructed to **tell no one** (an almost impossible situation), unlike Legion, who was to tell everyone. Why? Because most Jews living under twisted Judaistic law would not believe even though one went unto them from the dead (Luke 16:30-31) – “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Jairus and his wife doubtless now believed, but not most of those who frequented his synagogue, except for the woman healed of her issue whom he didn't have to exclude any more. No wonder “they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.”

February 10

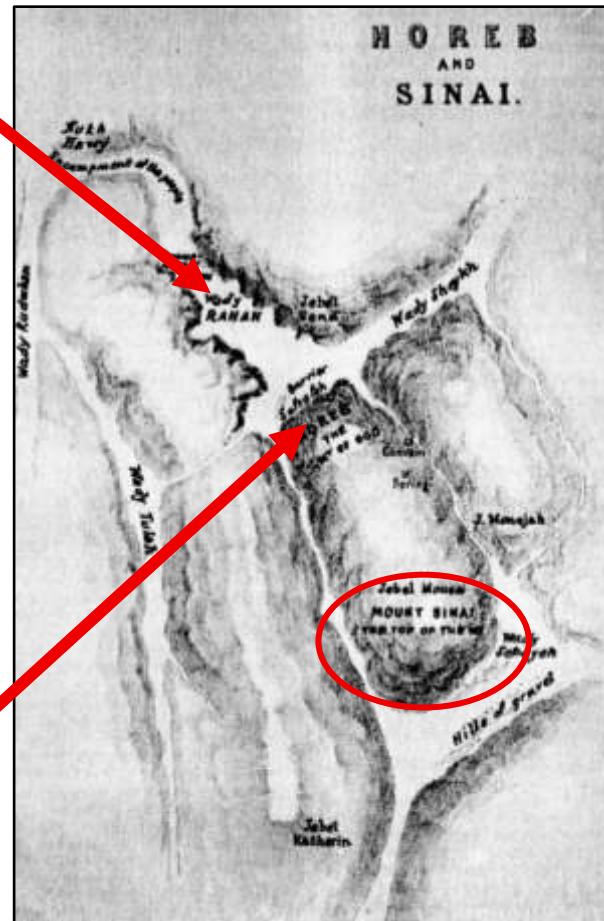
Exodus 19 – At Mt Horeb

Israel moved from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai and camped before Mount Horeb in the Wadi er-Rahah before the cliff Sufsafeh (Horeb) which rises some three hundred metres (1000 ft) before the plain and is fifteen hundred metres (5000 ft) above sea level. The plain itself is broad and level, and about three and a half kilometres (2 miles) long, meeting all the requirements of the Scriptural narrative.

V.1 – “In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, **the same day** came they into the wilderness of Sinai” – The 3rd month was when the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) was held, heralding the wheat harvest. It began 50 days after the 15th of Abib, the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:4-17). The phrase “the same day” strongly suggests that this was indeed the time of Pentecost (“the fiftieth day”). The events at **Mt Horeb** recorded here were the type of the events of the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. It had taken Israel 50 days to reach the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. This was a distance of around 300 miles (500 kms), and given that they had stayed in some places like

Alush for a week or so, and obviously spent some days at Rephidim, and almost certainly did not travel on Sabbaths, this meant that they had probably travelled a maximum of 10 miles (16 kms) a day on the days they journeyed. For a nation of around 2 million people with many children and flocks and herds this was a very strenuous time. That is why we are told many were “faint and weary” in Deut. 25:18. To suggest that Israel could have reached the alleged Mt Sinai in the Arabian Peninsula which is nearly 400 miles (640 kms) in distance in 50 days is simply “a bridge too far.” The traditional and long-accepted route of the Exodus is correct. See this web site for more proof in support of the traditional Mt Sinai – <https://curtisward.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/the-true-biblical-mount-sinai-jebel-musa/>.

V.2-8 – “Israel camped before the mount” – This was Mt Horeb called “the mountain of God” (Ex. 3:1). Mt Horeb was on the north west of Mt Sinai, the two eminent peaks in that



massif. To the north west of Mt Horeb was a large plain on which the nation encamped for the next 14 months until they departed on the 20th day of the second month of their second year out of Egypt (Num. 10:11). It is little wonder that Egyptian pottery from that era has been found on the plain before Mt Horeb, just as chariot wheels have been found in the Red Sea.

“Moses went up unto God (on Mt Horeb), and Yahweh called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” – Yahweh was about to take Israel as His wife (Jer. 2:2; 3:1,8,14; 31:32; Isa. 54:5; Hos. 2:19-20). If they kept His covenant they would “be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people” (as a spouse), and would be unto Him “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” These are the words Peter cites in 1 Pet. 2:9 of the relationship between Christ and his ecclesia (his future bride). Christ’s ecclesia was formed on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles led by Peter received the Holy Spirit in the form of “cloven tongues like as of fire” (i.e. in the shape of wings) – Acts 2:1-4. The eagle is a symbol of the Spirit (Isa. 40:31) and Yahweh had borne His ‘bride’ on “eagles’ wings” to Sinai. Similarly, Christ will bring the members of his bride to Mt Sinai for the Judgement Seat and the Marriage of the Lamb (see ‘Events Subsequent to the Return of Christ’ pgs. 22-38). Just like Israel, we have made a covenant and promised, “All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do.”

V.9-15 – “Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever” – To cement the covenant of marriage, Yahweh was to reveal His power to Israel on Mt

Sinai that Moses might be confirmed as their prophet and mediator (as a forerunner of Christ for us – see context of Deut. 18:15-19). There was to be three days of sanctification in which they would “wash their clothes” and refrain from cohabitation (V.15). They were to stay well clear of Mt Horeb on the pain of death (V.12-13). They were to even “set bounds unto the people round about” like a fence. These mounds are still visible today (see photo of Mt Horeb).



The fascinating thing is that Yahweh chose a place where the three courts of the Tabernacle and Temple of Solomon were revealed in the topography. Having stood on the plain pictured above, the writer can testify that though Mt Sinai is directly behind Mt Horeb, the former cannot be seen. This is the pattern of the Tabernacle that was constructed here. The plain represents the outer court. Mt Horeb represents the Holy Place which Moses had entered (V.3) and which was forbidden to the common people, and Mt Sinai represented the Most Holy Place which only God’s appointed mediator could enter and was unseen by Israel.

The time came “on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled” – There is a New Testament commentary on this event in Heb. 12:18-26 in which the Apostle contrasts the Mosaic Covenant with the Abrahamic Covenant (the new covenant) and reflects on the fear engendered when Yahweh came “down in the sight of all the people upon **mount Sinai**” (i.e. revealed above

the 'Most Holy') – “so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (Heb. 12:21). So fearful in fact was the sight and sound that the people retreated from the mount and “they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Ex. 20:18-19). This set forth the contrast between living under law (Mosaic Covenant), and living under grace (Abrahamic Covenant) which is why the Apostle says of those in Christ, “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb. 12:22-24), and counselled those in the ecclesia of the Hebrews who were contemplating returning to the Law because of persecution – “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth (Yahweh on Mt Sinai), much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” (Christ). Law convicts and repels (Rom. 7:8-10); faith in Christ draws near (Heb. 10:21-23).

V.20-25 – It was as well that Moses at 80 years of age was robust and full of physical strength for “Yahweh called Moses up to the top of the mount (Sinai); and Moses went up” and was immediately sent down again to warn the curious multitude not to come too close. Climbing Mt Sinai is no easy task. People have died doing so. This was Moses’ third ascent of the mountains before the plain (Horeb and Sinai). Moses objected that the people had already been warned, but he was sent back with a further warning for priests and people not to disrespect the sanctity of this place. It was a final witness that the people were not yet reconciled to God. Moses was to return with Aaron who was perfectly qualified to act as type of the nation as a whole for he became (in time) the priestly people in miniature.

The events of that day were meant to be a byword to all succeeding generations, and a memory so awesome to those who witnessed them, that their very terribleness would prevail on them to be obedient. We know the outcome – “all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers” (Num. 14:22-23). As John said, “There is no fear (*phobos* – dread) in love (*agape*); but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18), but there is a need for reverence – “let us cherish thankfulness so that we may ever offer to God an acceptable service, with godly reverence and awe” (Weymouth for Heb. 12:28).

Exodus 20 – Ten words

V.1-2 – “I am Yahweh thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” – Whenever language like this occurs in a preamble (such as in Gen. 15:7), it is a reference to the Atonement. That is what preceded the delivery in Israel’s hearing of the 10 commandments (*dâbâr* – words) – V.1 – “God spake all these words” (*dâbâr*). How tellingly the connection was thus shown between Israel’s recent redemption and their duty to serve God and be obedient.

V.3-17 – The ten commandments are well known, and the Law was “holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7:12), but due to the weakness of the flesh, men could not keep it perfectly (Rom. 8:3) and it condemned them (Rom. 7:11). Without forgiveness of sin through God’s grace, there was no hope of salvation. Yet many Jews had a ledger mentality thinking that if they could keep the credit column of “works of law” ahead of the debit column of sin and failure, then God owed them a reward – He was in their debt. It doesn’t work that way and the very presentation of the “words” (or commandments) revealed that fact. There are 11 occurrences of the phrase “thou shalt have **no...**” or “thou shalt **not...**” between V.3 and V.17 in which the 10 commandments are spelt out. Eleven is the

number of inadequacy and failure. The Law could not give life because of the weakness of the flesh.

God must always be the first and only God we serve, for no one can serve two masters (Matt. 6:24), hence the 1st commandment. The second was designed to ensure that Israel's perception of Yahweh should remain purely spiritual, and not degenerate into the worship of Him, the invisible, through the medium of some visible material symbol. The third commandment is against the flippant taking up of the responsibilities of the call – “take up” (Young's Lit.). The word “take” is *nâsâh* – to lift, and the word “vain” is *shav* – to desolate; to ruin by destructive evil. Once the obligations of the truth are accepted (“All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do”), there must be no turning back to the ways of Egypt. The Sabbath was to be set aside for the works of God. Rest from sin and its bondage was to be the goal of God's people and the object of their longings. Then came “the first commandment with promise” (Eph. 6:2-3) – “Honour thy father and thy mother” which Jewish law-keepers in Christ's day ignored with their Corban law (Matt. 15:4-6). The principle was simple. If they could not honour father and mother whom they could see, how would they learn to honour the God of heaven whom they could not see. It is to Him that we look for grace (5th). The 6th commandment – “Thou shalt not kill” speaks of the problem in man (6) first seen in Cain. Envy and hatred are incipient murder (Matt. 5:21-22). Adultery is the breaking of a covenant, so it sits in the 7th position. Stealing bespeaks dishonesty and lack of integrity and selfishness. Bearing false witness in order to bring others down is tantamount to murder, and is often a tool for acquiring the coveted property of others (remember Naboth's vineyard).

V.18-21 – The mighty thunderings, the savage lightning and the piercing trumpet forced the people away from the smoking mountain and “they removed, and stood afar off” and requested Moses to represent them – “Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” Moses' response was, “Fear not: for God is come to prove (*nâsâh* – to test) you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not,” but they “stood afar off” while “Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.” It was not a propitious start for a fledgling nation called to be the wife of the Almighty.

V.22-26 – “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon” – One representation of Himself would God allow. This unique object was to be an altar, and that, one made from raw materials untouched by man's device or art. Its constituent parts were to be God-made and not man-made. Moreover, they were not to “go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.” Steps required the lifting up of the leg, thus exposing lower leg flesh. Nothing to do with the flesh was to desecrate God's altar because it was all about sacrifice – “they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24).

Psalm 73 – It is good to draw near unto God

V.1 – **“A Psalm of Asaph.”** Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart” – This psalm by Asaph is encouraging to those under duress from the overwhelming wickedness of the times in which they live. Weighed down with personal weaknesses, and distraught at the apparent freedom of others within their circle to get away with bad behaviour, God's servants can sometimes reach a point of despair, holding on only by their fingertips (V.2). They may question why they have cleansed their way while others seem to prosper in sin (V.11-14). The thought of admitting their despair to others is too painful because they are conscious of its negative effect on them (V.15-16). But an antidote was discovered by Asaph (V.17) – “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.” It is not unreasonable to assume that the “sanctuary” refers to the Tabernacle or Temple in which Asaph served. However, the word is in the plural number in the Hebrew. It should be rendered “sanctuaries”

as in Young's Literal translation (supported by the ISV, Darby, and Rotherham who has "the holy places of God"). It is not a reference to a building, but to any place where prayer brings one close to God. This is revealed in verses 23 to 28 – "It is good for me to draw near to God." Asaph spent most of his waking hours in the courts of Yahweh's house because that was his employment. His name means "collector" and he spent his time collecting and arranging the singing of the songs of praise in that place (1 Chron. 15:19; 16:7). He was always there, but that did not prevent the depression expressed in the early part of the psalm. That he did not mean a building on earth is indicated by his plaintive cry, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

The real antidote to his depressed state of mind was to rebuild his relationship with God. This is best done away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. In the quietness and solitude of places where uninterrupted communion and engagement with God is possible, there we can rise above our misgivings and doubts that may be created by our observations of others who appear to prosper in wickedness. This was the practice of our Lord who often sought a quiet place to pray in the wake of frustrating events. After his infuriating time in a synagogue battling opposition from Scribes and Pharisees over the healing of a man with a withered hand, the record says – "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). He needed it. Building and leaning upon a close personal relationship with God is the antidote to every cause of disappointment and despair. Prayer becomes the bastion of life in troubled times. Paul put it another way in his parting message to the leaders of the ecclesia at Ephesus – "now, brethren, I **commend** you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). The word "commend" is *paratithēmi* – to place alongside, i.e. present. It matches Asaph's "it is good for me to draw near to God."

Mark 6

V.1-6 – The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth is recorded in detail in Luke 4:16-30 (see comments on Luke 4 on **March 14** pg. 29). Not even his mighty works could raise them above shallow parochialism, and "he marvelled because of their unbelief," so "he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them." It was evidence that "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house."

V.7-13 – The sending forth of his 12 disciples to preach and heal has companion accounts in Matt. 10:11-13 and Luke 10:7-8. The comments on Matt. 10 on July 9 are repeated here – The twelve apostles were appointed and sent out with instructions to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." What they were to preach, and the way they were to react to the response is detailed. They were to use the power to heal freely in gratitude for what had been given them. The "labourer is worthy of his hire" principle was invoked (Luke 10:7), but not all would go smoothly.

V.14-29 – When Herod Antipas heard of Jesus, he assumed it was John the Baptist whom he had beheaded. What follows is the account of that evil deed. Herod imprisoned John the Baptist in his mountain top fortress at Machaerus after his three and a half year ministry because of his serious criticism of Herod's actions in stealing his brother's wife. John's Nazariteship is brought to a successful conclusion as his head is separated from his body (the whole point of Nazariteship). The bitter hatred of Herodias craved revenge against John, but Herod feared upsetting the people who loved John (V.5). During Herod's birthday party, Salome, Herodias's daughter's racy dancing so impressed him that he made a rash drunken vow to give her whatever she desired. Schooled by her mother, she asked John's head on a platter. Mortified by

his own folly, Herod gave the order for the execution. It is said that Salome many years later was beheaded in Spain when skating on thin ice!

V.33-44 – There were two feedings of a multitude – the 5,000 mainly Jews – and the 4,000 mainly Gentiles (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus had compassion on 'sheep' with no shepherd (V.34). Here were Jews misled by Judaistic leaders who made their burdens unbearable (Acts 15:10). What these Jews needed was faith in the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that they might receive God's grace. Hence, there were 5 loaves (John 5:2) and 2 fish (Jew and Gentile) for a total of 7 = covenant. The 4,000 were fed with 7 loaves for they being Gentiles needed the covenant God made with Abraham (Gal. 3). This is noted in Rom. 3:30 where the Apostle says, "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by (ek – out of) faith, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through the faith" (Diaglott). The 5,000 Jews left 12 wicker hand baskets (Gr. *kophinos*) of crumbs. The 4,000 Gentiles left only 7 small lunch packs (*spuris* – a lunch hamper woven from reeds). Don't be deflected by those who point out that *spuris* is the word used of the basket Paul was lowered down the wall of Damascus in (Acts 9:26). Woven reed baskets can be of any size. It is ludicrous to think the disciples used a bag that size to carry their lunch on a day trip. What is the meaning of this? It is simple – the Gentiles were hungrier for the teachings of Christ than the Jews. History has testified to that.

V.45-52 – The disciples in the absence of Christ were crossing the Sea of Galilee (called "Galilee of the nations" – Isa. 9:1) towards Capernaum ("the city of comfort") in a 'ship' (the ecclesia) in the company of their brethren (fellow disciples). The 'ecclesial ship' was being buffeted and tossed to and fro by a violent storm (Rev. 16:14), and only the appearance of Christ could save them. When he arrived, the storm was calmed (Ps. 65:7), and the ship was immediately at the place they had set out for – "the city of comfort" (John 6:21; Isa. 51:3; 66:13; Zech. 1:17). There is a lesson for us in this account. Peter's typical enthusiasm saw him ask, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." This sounds like an act of faith, but it was not wise. He started well, but the turbulence changed all that. It is better to remain in the ecclesial ship in a time of violent storms at the end of the days rather than test our faith in a turbulent world. The Lord is not here yet, and he was not yet in the ship with his disciples when Peter made his request. Stay in the ship. The calm will soon come when he arrives.

V.53-56 – The healing continued especially when the hem of Christ's garment was touched. He was the Word made flesh after all.

February 11

Exodus 21

The last 5 of the 10 commandments dealt with human relationships. Now there is an extrapolation of the principles involved.

V.1-6 – The boring of a servant's ear with an awl (see picture) pointed to our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Messianic psalm – Ps. 40:6, 'Christ' in David (1 Peter 1:10-11) says, "mine ears hast thou opened." The Hebrew word for "opened" is *karah*

Machaerus – Herod's mountain stronghold

- Built high on a mountain ridge with a deep ravine below.
- Situated on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea near Abarim and Pisgah.
- The dungeon was one level below the banquet hall.

<p>awl</p> <p>noun \\wl \\</p> <p>Definition</p> <p>: a pointed tool for marking surfaces or piercing small holes (as in leather or wood)</p>	
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– Strong's definition is – properly to dig; figuratively to plot; generally to bore or open. This is a reference to this practice of V.1-6 where a slave, content to remain with his master and not be released after 6 years of service, had his ear bored through with an awl against a door post. Jesus Christ was such a slave. His ear was always attentive to his Father's early morning teachings (Isa. 50:4-5). Ps. 40:6-8 is cited in Hebrews 10:5-10. This emphasizes the critical importance of such an hearing ear. "I come to do thy will," said this permanent servant whose ear had been bored through. That "will" (Heb. 10:10), if we adopt it by similarly hearing, will lead to eternal life in which we will "serve him forever" (V.6).

V.7-11 – "And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid servant, she shall not go out as the menservants do" – Whereas men servants could be released after 6 years, it was not so with a female who was sold to be made the concubine, or secondary wife, of the purchaser. If this intention was carried out, then she was entitled to her status and maintenance as a wife during her lifetime, even though her husband might take another 'legitimate' wife (V.10), and if he did so, he was not to diminish "her duty of marriage" (i.e. food, lodging and conjugal obligations).

V.12-36 deal with laws concerning physical injuries. The sixth commandment made clear that unlawful killing was to be strictly prohibited. The rules now outlined set forth judgements concerning capital offences (V.12-17), and non-capital offences (V.18-36). The penalty to be observed in regard to capital punishment, was usually death by stoning. The clear message is that men must take responsibility for the effect of their actions on others. Christ's summary of the content of the ordinances of the Law was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:31 citing Lev. 19:18). To this he added what is commonly called the Golden Rule – "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is **the law** and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12).

In actual fact, being in Christ, and therefore not under the Law of Moses, we are under a very demanding law that has attached to it even harsher penalties than the Law of Moses for disobedience. It is called by the Apostle Paul the law of Christ in 1 Cor. 9:21 where he wrote – "To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but **under the law to Christ**,) that I might gain them that are without law." Under the law of Christ, unreasonable hatred is considered as equivalent to murder (1 John 2:9,11; 3:15; 4:20); anger without due cause is treated as the intent to murder (Matt. 5:21-22). The respect that the Law demanded of children towards parents is made subordinate to that due to Christ (Luke 14:26; Matt. 10:37). The Law permitted retaliation in non-capital offences, but Christ, whilst recognising that the Law was just, asked that love and forgiveness prevail (Matt. 5:38-44). He warned that if his followers do not do so, the law of retaliation will be applied against them at the Judgement Seat (Matt. 7:1-2). In other words, our obligations in Christ are in many ways more demanding than those of the law of Moses. So, freedom in Christ (Gal. 5:1) is freedom from the strictures and condemnation of the Law of Moses, not freedom from its principles which have been raised to even higher levels by the commandments of Christ.

Psalm 74 – God works salvation in the earth

V.1 – "**Maschil of Asaph.** O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?" – This teaching (Maschil) psalm of Asaph has baffled commentators as to its possible background. Some assert that it is placed in the time of Hezekiah when the Assyrians invaded in his 14th year. Certainly, some of the sentiments of the psalm can be related to the events of that time. Others suggest it is prophetic of the overthrow of Judah and the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in BC 586 because of language like V.7 – "They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground." Still others see it as a

prophecy of the latter days when Gog invades the Land and seemingly all hope is lost for Israel as God brings severe judgements on His own people for their wickedness (Ezek. 39:23-29). All of these suggestions have a degree of merit, but when it is not possible to be dogmatic about the background, it pays to read the psalm for its underlying spiritual lessons that can be applied today.

The future is based on the past. There are clear allusions to God redeeming His people from Egypt and caring for them in their wilderness journey to the Land. There is also an allusion to the building of the temple by Solomon, and then that temple is seen destroyed. In our time, we need to base our confidence in the future on the firm conviction of God's redemptive powers in the past – "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth" (V.12). This was manifested in the redemption of Israel which saw the mighty powers of Egypt destroyed (V.13-14). God was in complete control then, as He is now (V.16-17), and as back then, He will avenge the blasphemy of His name (V.10,18,22-23). We can have confidence in a God with a record like that, for He will "have respect unto the covenant" (V.20) in the latter days, as Jeremiah said – "The fierce anger of Yahweh shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: **in the latter days ye shall consider it**" (Jer. 30:24). We are in those days.

Mark 7

V.1-13 - The criticism by the Scribes and Pharisees of the failure of Christ's disciples to observe the laws of ritual cleanliness sparked a stern condemnation of their Judaism. Their punctiliousness over ritual cleansing cloaked a huge betrayal of the 5th commandment through their Corban law. This rabbinical subterfuge allowed them to deny their parents any support because all their assets were devoted to the temple service. "Honour thy father and mother" had been completely submerged. In fact, Isa. 29:13 had been fulfilled – "in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the **commandments of men.**"

V.14-23 – What actually defiles men comes next. Edible food that goes into the mouth does no harm. What does harm is that which comes out of the heart of the natural man, the mouth being its spokesman (V.21; Luke 6:45). In the list of V.21-22, the Lord mentions 13 things that emanate from the deceptive and desperately sick heart of the natural man (Jer. 17:9). These are headed by "evil thoughts" (the real source of the actions that follow). 13 is the number of rebellion (Gen. 14:4; Nimrod = "we will rebel" the 13th generation from Adam, etc.).

V.24-30 – The Lord encountered a Gentile woman, a Syrophenician who grasped the crumbs that fell from Israel's table due to their disinterest in the "bread from heaven." Mature dogs were always kept outside the house in those times (Rev. 22:15). The Greek for dogs here is *kunarion* – a puppy. These were allowed under the table! This Gentile woman knew her place but eagerly grasped what many in Israel did not want.

V.31-37 – The principle manifested in the Gentile woman is illustrated by an enacted parable. A deaf and dumb man is brought to the Lord. Those who cannot hear from birth (human nature in its infancy), cannot speak. This man is taken aside from the multitude (a necessary thing), the Lord puts his fingers into his ear (hearing is essential), spits and touches his tongue. Christ's spittle symbolizes his words/teachings (when we speak spittle accompanies the sound). Paul refers to this process in Rom. 10:8-10,17 – "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." This man can now hear, and now he can confess from the heart.

February 12

Exodus 22 – Sundry laws of social responsibility

This chapter continues the judgements which Moses was instructed to place before the people. As the laws on capital punishment point to the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” this chapter contains legislation concerning property as relating to the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” It reveals that man’s attitude to his fellow-man should be based on his attitude to God and His law.

V.1 – “If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore **five** oxen for an ox, and **four** sheep for a sheep” – One impressive feature of this law is its wisdom in dealing with thieving. It demands compensation be paid to the one suffering loss, a far more just provision than imprisonment which is the normal Gentile punishment. Incarcerated thieves cannot work to repay what they stole. If they are put to work and must repay five oxen for a stolen ox (the ‘Rolls Royce’ of a herd, hence it is first in the list of burnt offerings in Lev. 1), and four sheep for a stolen sheep (a decreased imposition indicating the lesser value of sheep *visa vis* oxen), there is a distinct disincentive to steal again. God’s laws are always wise. This law was instinctively applied by David to Nathan’s parable (2 Sam. 12:6), and David did pay with the loss of four sons for stealing Uriah’s ewe lamb.

V.2-4 – “If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him” – If the breaking and entering was in the darkness of night, the defender was excused if he mortally injured the thief in the darkness, but such violence was likely to be inexcusable in the daytime (“If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him”), and the avenger of blood would be justified in proceeding against him, forcing him to the City of Refuge where the case could be properly heard by the judges. However, one thing was sure – restitution must be made – “he should make full restitution” or slavery awaited him. If he was caught red-handed “he shall restore double.”

V.5-15 – The principles established in the previous laws govern those that follow. Deliberate misuse of another’s field; carelessness with fire; loss of goods held in trust; loss of animals entrusted to others; goods lent or hired, are all covered. Doubtful cases were brought to the appointed judges, and their assessment stood, but where resolution of cases was obvious, then restitution was required – “he shall surely make it good.” Men were held accountable for the effect of their actions on others and it depended on motivation, concern for the welfare of others and responsibility in matters of trust. The spiritual lesson is apparent. Yahweh has delivered His flock into the care of those appointed to take the oversight thereof, and will hold them accountable for the safety of its members (1 Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17). Even Christ, the Good Shepherd, accounted to his Father for the state of the flock placed in his care (John 17:12).

V.16-31 – The laws and judgements then listed relate to the treatment of, and punishments for, various social evils. In legislating regarding them, the balanced character of Yahweh is revealed. He is severe in punishing evil (V.18-20), compassionate towards the needy (V.21-27), deserving Himself of respect and obedience (V.28-30), holy in all His ways (V.3 to chap. 23:9).

Stealing the virtue of a young woman who was not betrothed to another required accepting the responsibilities of marriage to her. If her father refused, an appropriate dowry in compensation was required. Witches, the sexually depraved and idolators were to be summarily eliminated. Strangers, widows and the fatherless were not to be oppressed but rather supported, for if “they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry” because Yahweh is “a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows” (Ps. 68:5). Interest (“usury”) on money lent was forbidden, and a cloak taken as a pledge was to be restored at the end of the working day for warmth on cold nights in the open. Disrespect for rulers was condemned – “Thou shalt not

revile the gods (*elohim* = human judges), nor curse the ruler of thy people." The firstborn of the family, field and beasts were Yahweh's, and no delay in offering would be entertained. Furthermore, personal holiness was required of God's people. No corruption in any form would be permitted. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7) sums up all the requirements of the Law, and of the Gospel, for the call of the Truth is a call to God manifestation.

Psalm 75 – The righteous shall be exalted

V.1 – "To the chief Musician, Altaschith, **A Psalm or Song of Asaph.** Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare" – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 74. Some have suggested that the background of this psalm is the Assyrian invasion of Judah in the days of Hezekiah. They point to several phrases in the psalm that could be applied to the experiences of Hezekiah at that time; e.g. V.7 – "he putteth down one, and setteth up another" is related to Sennacherib (put down) and Hezekiah (set up after being healed). The difficulty with this is that the superscription says this is a psalm of Asaph who lived in the time of David. This is skirted around by suggesting that Asaph gave his name to subsequent generations for use by them in composing songs. A much better suggestion is that the sentiments of the psalm have strong links with the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam. 2:1-10) and the song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), and the prophecy of Zacharias (Luke 1:68-79). The "pillars" of the earth of V.3 are matched by Hannah's "for the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's" (1 Sam. 2:8). The boasting of V.4-5 is matched in 2 Sam. 2:3 by "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth," and by Luke 1:51 – "he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." The "horn" (a symbol of power) of V.4,5,10 in this psalm are matched by 1 Sam. 2:1,10 – "mine horn is exalted in Yahweh" and "exalt the horn of his anointed," and in Luke 1:69 – "hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." "God is the judge" has echoes in 1 Sam. 2:3,10 – "by him actions are weighed" and "Yahweh shall judge the ends of the earth." Asaph's words in V.7, "he putteth down one, and setteth up another" find echoes in 1 Sam. 2:7 – "he bringeth low, and lifteth up," and in Luke 1:48,52 – "he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden," and "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." Asaph's, "I will rejoice for ever" (RSV) is matched by 1 Sam. 2:1 – "My heart rejoiceth in Yahweh" and Luke 1:47 – "my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." These obvious connections suggest that like previous psalms of Asaph the aim is to prophesy about the future, particularly in relation to Messiah, rather than to reflect on the past, or the present.

Given the above, the voice of Messiah is clearly heard in V.2 (RSV) – "At the set time which I appoint I will judge with equity." We are very near the day when Christ will return to judge his household (1 Pet. 4:17 – "judgement must begin at the house of God") and he will be looking for the kind of faith manifested in Asaph, Hannah, Mary and Zacharias (see V.10). Then he will turn to the nations...

V.6-10 – "For **promotion** cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and **setteth** up another." The same Hebrew word *rum* is translated "lift not up" in V.4,5; "promotion" in V.6, "setteth" in V.7 and "exalted" in V.10. Elevation (being "lifted up" RV) does not come from the east, west or south. It definitely does not come from the **north**. That is the direction that **Divine judgement** always comes from (Isa. 41:25; Jer. 1:13-15; 6:22; 10:22; 47:2; 50:3; 51:48; Ezek. 1:4; 38:15; 39:2; etc).

"For in the hand of Yahweh there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same" – This language is used of the dreadful period of God's judgements against a guilty world from the time of Armageddon and for 40 years thereafter to humble mankind and eradicate the wicked from the earth (Jer. 25:15,17,27-28; Rev. 14:9-10;

16:19). The “mixture” is alluding to the medicated wine or potion of stupifying drugs that was given to criminals to drink prior to their execution (Prov. 23:30; Isa. 5:22). This is explained in Jer. 25:16 – “they shall drink, and be moved, and be **mad**, because of the sword that I will send among them.” Hence, the conclusion – “All the **horns** (power) of the wicked also will I cut off; but the **horns** (power = their likeness to Christ) of the righteous shall be exalted.”

Psalm 76 – God’s dwelling place is in Zion

V.1 – “**To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph.** In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 75. This psalm of Asaph clearly builds on Ps. 75. God’s name begins each psalm, and He is called the “God of Jacob” in both (V.9 and V.6 in the respective psalms). He is seen rising in judgement in both. Similarly, the “meek of the earth” are seen to be redeemed in both, and they give thanks (V.1 and V.10), because the kings and princes of the world are cut off (V.10 and V.12 respectively).

Given the above, those who saw the Assyrian invasion in the 14th year of Hezekiah as the background to Ps. 75 also attribute this psalm to that era. Their problem though is compounded by the subscription to this psalm which appears (incorrectly) in the superscription of Ps. 77 – “To the chief Musician, to **Jeduthun.**” He too was contemporary with David, like Asaph (1 Chron. 16:41-42). This puts the suggestion that the psalm was written after the events of the Assyrian invasion under the spotlight. It clearly does not stand up under scrutiny. What then is the answer. It must be that those elements of the psalm which can be identified with the events of the Assyrian invasion in Hezekiah’s time match the events of the latter days when Gog will invade the Land of Israel, for they were its type. Sennacherib’s invasion was the type of Gog’s in the latter days (Isa. 10:5,24; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5,6). It is unsurprising then that elements of the psalm can be matched with both Hezekiah’s experiences and latter-day events.

This psalm focuses more on the ultimate outcomes of Armageddon and the 40 years of judgement that follow than on the destruction of the wicked required to establish the Kingdom of God. That is why V.1-2 set the scene. “In Judah is God known” is because Christ will “save the tents of Judah first” (Zech. 12:7); and “his name is great in Israel” refers to the return of the remnant of scattered Israel under Elijah in the Second Exodus (see Hos. 2:14-20 – “I will betroth thee unto me for ever,” etc.). “In **Salem** also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion” refers to the building of the “house of prayer for all peoples” (RSV for Isa. 56:7). Jerusalem means “the vision of peace,” but peace having been established, Zion is then called “Salem” (peace). Melchizedek was “king of Salem” (Gen. 14:18) and was a marvellous type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The events of Gen. 14 were the first time that Armageddon and the setting up the Kingdom were prophesied in Scripture (see comments on Gen. 14 on January 7). That is why V.3 of the psalm says, “There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle” for the power of the nations will have been destroyed beginning in Zion by Christ on behalf of Yahweh “whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem” (Isa. 31:9).

V.4-9 – “Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey” – ‘Mountains’ will be moved in establishing the Kingdom (Zech. 4:7; 6:1; Isa. 41:15; 64:1-4; Jer. 51:25; Rev. 16:20) and they will be become like the detritus of prey. No power on earth will stand before Yahweh – “who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?” All the sophisticated weapons of man will prove useless against the power wielded by Christ and the saints – “all the men of war were unable to use their hands” (V.5) and “both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep” (V.6). And the outcome? – “Thou didst cause judgement to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still” (Zech. 1:11). And for what purpose? –

"When God arose to judgement, to save all the meek of the earth," for they shall inherit it (Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5).

V.10-12 – "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" – God uses the foolishness of man to further His purpose. When the rebellious nations support the Papacy against Christ's rule (Ps. 2) after having received several warnings and appeals (Ps. 2:10-12; Rev. 14:6-7,9-10), their total destruction will be justified, and further rebellion quashed ("restrained"). There is only one sensible way to go – "Vow, and pay unto Yahweh your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared."

Mark 8

V.1-10 – The feeding of the four thousand is quite different to that of the 5,000. The latter were primarily Jews. That is why 2 Kings 1 was invoked as they were organized into groups of 50 and fed with 5 loaves and two fish. Here, the 4,000 are fed with seven loaves. Even in the collection of scraps there was a difference. The comments made on the two feedings on February 10 are repeated here. There are important lessons involved.

Comments on Mark 6:33-44. There were two feedings of a multitude – the 5,000 mainly Jews – and the 4,000 mainly Gentiles (Mark 8:1-9). Jesus has compassion on 'sheep' with no shepherd (V.34). Here were Jews misled by Judaistic leaders who made their burdens unbearable (Acts 15:10). What these Jews needed was **faith** in the promises made to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob so that they might receive God's **grace**. Hence, there were **5 loaves** (John 5:2) and **2 fish** (Jew and Gentile) for a total of **7** = covenant. The 4,000 were fed with **7 loaves** for they being Gentiles needed the covenant God made with Abraham (Gal. 3). This is noted in Rom. 3:30 where the Apostle says, "Seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by (ek – out of) **faith**, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through **the faith**" (Diaglott).

V.11-21 – The perennial sign seekers demanded a sign but were repudiated – "Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation." He departed from the doubters but had an issue to resolve with his disciples. "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and the leaven of Herod" – This mystified the disciples who had forgotten to bring bread in the boat. The Lord gave his disciples a lashing for their lack of perception – "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Given this was clearly an important matter to the Lord, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether we perceive. What the Lord expected them to understand was the meaning of the collection of the scraps from the two feedings. The 5,000 Jews left 12 (Israel) wicker hand baskets (Gr. *kophinos*) of crumbs. The 4,000 Gentiles left only 7 small lunch packs (*spuris* – a lunch hamper woven from reeds). Some point out that *spuris* is the word used of the basket Paul was lowered down the wall of Damascus in (Acts 9:26). Woven reed baskets can be of any size. It is ridiculous to think the disciples used a bag that size to carry their lunch on a day trip! What is the meaning of this? It is simple – the Gentiles were hungrier for the teachings of Christ than the Jews. History has testified to that.

V.22-26 – The healing of the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 is another enacted parable in Mark's Gospel written primarily for Romans. As in Mark 7:33, Christ uses his spittle in the healing of this blind man. When we speak a small amount of moisture is ejected from the mouth. Hence, the water of the Word came forth from the mouth of he who was "the word made flesh." He could say, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). The people of Bethsaida ("the house of fishing") were blind (Matt. 11:21; Luke 10:13). They ignored

or rejected Christ's teachings. This is why Jesus took this blind man **out of the town** (V.23). This miracle was not for the people of Bethsaida, but for the Gentiles who would later receive Mark's record. The word of Christ (symbolized by his spittle) is applied to this blind man's eyes, and the healing hands of the Lord are placed upon him. To the question whether he saw anything, the man responded that he saw "men walking as trees." That is larger than reality. It is however, a phenomenon of those coming into the truth to see men as larger in the scheme of things than they actually are. The antidote is further instruction and to "look up" to a higher being. So, the Lord applied his hands to the eyes and instructs him to "look up" – i.e. to look higher up to God. Then we understand the true state of mankind and see "every man clearly." The cured blind man is sent straight home. He is not permitted to go into the town as his healing would make no impression on the faithless inhabitants of Bethsaida. Their blindness would continue and lead to their ultimate destruction (Matt. 11:21).

V.27-38 – See comments on Matt. 16 on July 15. An additional comment here is the warning that being ashamed of Christ in a sinful time will not play well at the Judgement Seat – "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

February 13

Exodus 23 – Laws of justice

Seven laws of justice and honesty in social dealings begin this chapter consistent with what Yahweh requires of His people – "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but **to do justly**, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8). Honesty is placed first here because without it the rest are not achievable, neither the **seven laws** that follow about human relations.

V.1-9 – "Thou shalt not raise (*nâsâh* – to lift) a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" – The 9th commandment was, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16). That commandment is extrapolated here. The RV translates, "Thou shalt not **take up** a false report" and the ESV, "You shall not **spread** a false report." It is one thing to make a false accusation, it is another to spread it to others in order to have them join your cause. Those who do are next warned, "put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." If that happens then they are guilty of the next stipulation – "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment." One cannot help but think of the way Christ was unjustly treated in the six trials he endured.

In our grossly corrupt Humanistic world the next law is often broken – "Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause" (V.3). The underdog is not always right, nor should those who are morally corrupt be supported to continue their evils. Nor is poverty of itself the hallmark of uprightness (V.6). True justice must be applied to every case based on the facts, not on sentiment, or a misplaced sense of 'fairness' such as is admired and practiced by Humanists. The principles, statutes and laws of God are the only basis for assessment of the justness of a cause.

Return of straying animals to their owner, and rescuing stricken beasts, even those owned by an enemy was enjoined, in harmony with Christ's principles (Matt. 5:44). The over-arching principle was – "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked." This included not accepting gifts which can blind the eyes – "for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous." And to oppress a "stranger" was to deny their own former status as strangers and slaves in Egypt.

V.10-19 – The 4th commandment was the Sabbath law. This set of ordinances extrapolates the Sabbath principle into every aspect of Israel's life in the Land. Even the land was to rest in the seventh year and what it did produce without cultivation would be for the poor and the beasts. Without cultivation, beasts of burden and servants could also rest for a year. However, a time of rest and inactivity was not to be used to enquire after false gods (V.13), for it is a phenomenon of flesh that when spiritually healthy pressure is off, it often seeks distraction. But there was always something to look forward to, even in a fallow year, for "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year" (V.14). At Passover time, "the feast of unleavened bread"; 50 days later, "the feast of harvest" (weeks); and "the feast of ingathering" (tabernacles) at "the end of the year" (V.16). All males were to attend three times in the year (V.17). The "my sacrifice" of V.18 is primarily a reference to the Passover lamb (Ex. 34:25). None of it was to be left to the morning (Ex. 12:10). All sacrifices were Yahweh's, but for obvious reasons He calls the Passover lamb "my sacrifice" (Gen. 3:21; Rev. 13:8; John 1:29). Yahweh had redeemed Israel by destroying the firstborns of Egypt and then claimed Israel's firstborns as His own (Ex. 13:2). They were not to fail to bring the firstfruits of the Land to Him either on that principle.

"Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" – That which is designed for life (a mother's milk) must not become the cause of death! This may hark back to V.13. It is said there was a custom among ancient heathens, when they had gathered in all their fruits, to take a kid, and boil it in the dam's milk; and then in a 'magical' way, to go about and sprinkle all their trees, and fields, and gardens, and orchards with it, thinking by these means, that they should make them fruitful, and bring forth more abundantly in the following year. Israel had learnt the ways of Egypt and needed to reject all such practices and they were heading to Canaan where they doubtless existed. There is an important principle involved. Over indulgence of children (as in the case of Eli's sons) is effectively destroying them in the family home. There have been many like cases. Today's world indulges children more than any generation before it, and the negative consequences are very evident. They boil their offspring in their mother's milk, as it were.

V.20-33 – "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" – This is a reference to Michael the archangel as is clear from Isa. 63:9 – "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them." Hence, he had delegated authority to forgive or condemn sin – "he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." Obedience would lead to victory over the inhabitants of Canaan because of angelic activity on Israel's behalf. These were the "hornets" that God would send in advance of Israel (cp. V.23 with V.28; see also V.31 – "I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand [through the angels]; and thou shalt drive them out before thee").

Israel were to utterly destroy every vestige of idolatry in the Land, but it would be a slow process – "little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land" (V.29-30), for a total 'vacuum' would implode on them. The same principle applies to our finding an inheritance in the Land of Promise. It is only over a long period of wrestling with the weaknesses of the flesh that the 'Canaanite' (that which humiliates us all too often – Phil. 3:21) can be displaced. It is a painfully slow process, but if we decide to give up and turn to idols (V.32-33) the battle is lost along with our heritage.

Psalm 77 – Who is so great a God as our God?

V.1 – "To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, **A Psalm of Asaph**. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me" – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 76. If we accept that the author is the Asaph of David's time and not another Asaph in the time of Hezekiah as some postulate (2 Kings 18:18,37), then like the previous 'Asaph' psalms (namely, 73 to 76), any connection with the Assyrian invasion in the

14th year of Hezekiah is either prophetic or incidental. What we know about Asaph is that he passed through some very difficult times, as is revealed in Ps. 73. It is likely therefore that the personal pronoun "I" in V.1 is a reference to himself as a forerunner and type of the Messiah. In all his psalms, Asaph looks to Israel's Messiah.

The pause marks (Selah) seem to divide the psalm into four sections. V.1-3 – Asaph pours out his distress at the problems that overwhelmed him; V.4-9 – Lying awake at night he wondered whether it was possible that God had forgotten mercy (the interrogative nature of his musings indicate he did not believe that to be so); V.10-15 – He remembered God's great mercies to Israel – "I will remember thy wonders of old" including that of His sanctuary in which he served; and in V.16-20, Asaph projects into the future and the ultimate redemption of Israel.

V.16 – "The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled" – The sea is the symbol for nations (Isa. 17:12-13). When Yahweh sets out "the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea" in the Second Exodus (Isa. 11:11), the 'sea of nations' will be severely shaken (Hag. 2:6).

V.18 – "The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven (government): the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook" – This can only be the language of the seven thunder judgements of Rev. 10:3 from Armageddon to the overthrow of all nations. That these events are about the redemption of Israel is confirmed by V.20 – "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (cp. Isa. 63:12-13 and Rev. 19:11).

The take-away lesson of this psalm is that the antidote to times of severe trial is to look to the certainties of the future – (RSV) "looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Mark 9 – The lessons of the Transfiguration

V.1-13 – "There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" is a promise to Peter, James and John that they would see their Lord transformed in their sight as we will see him in the Kingdom. With the 'glorified' Lord there stood Moses and Elijah in glory. The reason for the selection of these two lay in their almost identical experience in (probably) the same cave on Mt Horeb. The lesson they were taught there is the lesson of the Transfiguration, hence their appearance alongside Christ. That lesson was that men are not changed for the Kingdom by drama, miracles or the manifestation of awesome power. Moses, secreted in a cave (Ex. 33 & 34) while the 'angel of Yahweh's presence' passed by (Isa. 63:9; Acts 7:38), saw the remnants of a glory that could have consumed him, but then heard a voice that proclaimed the most powerful of all influences on the lives of men – the Divine character declared by a voice, as the glory disappeared. Similarly, Elijah initially standing at the entrance to a cave (1 Kings 19:11-13) was driven back in fear as wind, earthquake and fire passed by. When the shaking, rumblings and loud noises accompanying those phenomena had subsided, Elijah nervously emerged from the rear of the cave when he finally had heard "the voice of a gentle whisper" (Rotherham for 1 Kings 19:12). He and Moses were taught that you cannot change men for the better by demonstrations of power (like that on Mt Carmel), you can only get them to sit up and take notice by that means. What changes men is a persistent "still small voice" teaching the things of the Word of God. Hence, the drama of the Transfiguration is followed by a cloud enshrouding the glory which was passing by (Luke 9:34-35). Then as the cloud passed over them, a voice proclaimed "this is my son the beloved, **hear** him." Then when the voice was past, they saw Jesus alone – the Word made flesh (John 1:14). Men cannot be changed for the Kingdom

by miracles, only by “a more sure word of teaching” (2 Pet. 1:16-21) “whereunto you do well to take heed” as the power that builds and sustains faith (Rom. 10:17), and instils over time the characteristics of the God revealed to Moses on the mount (Ex. 34:6-7).

V.14-29 illustrate the above principle by an enacted parable. As the Lord descended the mountain with his three disciples talking of his impending death, he encountered a commotion. A distressed father with an epileptic son had come seeking help, but found only the impotence of the remaining disciples who could normally heal such afflictions. Why could they not handle epilepsy on this occasion? Having just been transfigured in glory, it was fitting there should be a demonstration of the purpose of his mission for which he was to die – the redemption of the human race. This epileptic child was a microcosm of the entire human race. Epilepsy was once called ‘the falling sickness’ because those afflicted would routinely fall to the ground. In Adam, we all have ‘falling sickness’ in a spiritual sense. Its symptoms speak of the nature we all bear – struck down at any time and any place (Rom. 7:17-21), loss of control, foaming out shame (Jude 13), shrivelling away, etc. It is called by Christ “a foul spirit” (i.e. an unclean way of thinking), and “deaf” and “dumb” – i.e. unhearing and therefore non-confessing (Rom. 10:8-10). That is our natural condition in Adam.

The Lord engaged the father in what was clearly a fairly lengthy conversation in which the father of the child expressed his faith with painful reservations (another common human experience). The people who had previously come running (V.15) had now dispersed, having become disinterested in just words. They had come to see a miracle. But when they heard the father’s plaintive cry they came running again. Men want to see miracles, not hear the Word of God. On cue, the epileptic fell to the ground as though dead. “He is dead,” they said, just as the cure of our problem requires a ‘death’ in the waters of baptism. The Lord took him by the hand and there was a ‘resurrection’ to a newness of life. The vital message in this transaction is in V.22-23. The appeal of the distressed father was “if you have power (*dunamaι*), have compassion and help us.” The Lord’s response was “If you have the power (*dunamaι*) of belief, all things are subject to power (*dunatos*) to him that believes.” If only we believed that! Like the father of the boy here, we might say, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

The disciples, mystified by their inability to cure this problem asked why in the house (ecclesia). The problem of human nature could only be cured by one man – that man was Jesus Christ whose total self-denial (fasting), and unique close personal relationship with his Father (prayer) has secured him the glory seen in the vision on the mount of Transfiguration which guaranteed the ultimate redemption of the human race.

V.30-37 – The drama of the Transfiguration could distract from the critical element of Christ’s mission, so “he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.” They of course had no concept of that and expected the Kingdom to be set up immediately, hence, they were jostling among themselves – “by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.” The Lord set them straight – “If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all,” and counselled a childlike spirit as the key for entry to the Kingdom.

V.38-41 – There was a precedent for the Lord’s answer to John who complained about a man casting out demons in Christ’s name (Num. 11:26-29). The essence of that precedent was, “For he that is not against us is on our part.” Those who refresh others with the power of the Word (“a cup of water to drink in my name”) will not lose their reward (Dan. 12:3).

V.42-50 – “whosoever shall offend one of these **little ones** that believe in me, it is better for him that a **millstone** were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” The “little ones” are those over whom Yahweh places His protective hand in the absence of

the shepherd (Zech. 13:7). To put a stumblingblock before them will receive the fate of Catholicism (Rev. 18:21). Human nature is prone to stumbling, so drastic spiritual action is required. Hand, foot and eye must be sacrificed to achieve single-minded motivation and service. Christ weaves Isa. 66:24 into his exhortation. It refers to the dump west of the Temple in the Age to come where the bodies of those who have come to worship with a wicked heart will be thrown to rot and burn as a witness to all who come to that place that self-interest and an evil heart end in death. That was fair warning to disciples jostling for positions of power in the Kingdom, and interestingly quoted in the context of the Transfiguration (V.1), the very subject of the Kingdom.

February 14

Exodus 24 – The Mosaic Covenant ratified by blood

Ex. 24 represents a vital stage in the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Up to this point, the nation was not in a covenant relationship that permitted unfettered fellowship with their God. This was illustrated by the requirement to build mounds before Mt Horeb and the strict laws about approaching the mount (Ex. 19:12-13). So, only Moses was permitted to go up unto Yahweh on his next ascent (V.2) though accompanied part way by Aaron and his sons Nadab and Abihu and 70 elders as representatives of the people.

V.1-2 – “Come up unto Yahweh, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off” – Moses received this command at the end of his fourth ascent on the mountain (which began in Ex. 20:21). The Aaronic priesthood had not yet been appointed. Only Moses could operate as a mediator between Yahweh and His people at this time. The nation was still not in fellowship with Yahweh. The seventy elders who later became assistants to Moses in judging Israel (Num. 11:16-25) were the representatives of the people who consisted of Hebrews and a mixt multitude. As at Elim (Ex. 15:27), 12 and 70 play a role here – Twelve “pillars” representing the tribes of Israel and 70 elders representing the nation consisting, as it were, of ‘all nations’ in its mixt multitude (70 – Gen. 10).

V.3-4 – “Moses came and told the people all the words of Yahweh, and all the judgements: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Yahweh hath said will we do” – The Ten Commandments formed the basis of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13), whilst the laws (called “judgements”) of Exodus 21:1 to 23:33 comprise the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 24:7). In V.12, we are told that the 10 commandments were to be inscribed on tables of stone during Moses’ fifth ascent. The “judgements” (laws given during his 4th ascent) were written in a scroll, and in preparation for the ratification of the Mosaic Covenant, an altar (representing Yahweh) and 12 pillars (representing Israel) were erected.

V.5-8 – Moses “sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Yahweh” – From the time of Cain, the firstborn was the priest of the family (Gen. 4:7). The Melchizedek order was after that pattern as Heb. 12:23 makes clear – “an assembly of firstborn ones, enrolled in the heavens” (Rotherham – the word is plural in the Greek) for we shall be kings and priests (Rev. 5:9-10). Christ, as God’s ‘firstborn’ has restored the Melchizedek priesthood (Heb. 7:11-12). So, the “young men” were the male firstborns in Israel at the time who operated as priests. After Moses had written Yahweh’s laws in a scroll, built an altar and established 12 pillars, the priests of the time – the firstborn of each family prepared the sacrifices for the ratification of the Mosaic Covenant. Though given 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant it was the first to be ratified by blood (see Heb. 8:7; 10:9). A sprinkled scroll and people now permitted full fellowship between Yahweh and His people whose aforementioned representatives shared a fellowship meal with the Elohim on their behalf.

Having agreed to the initial Covenant proposal even before the 10 commandments were delivered with a positive response (Ex. 19:7-8 – “All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do”), the nation now having heard all the words Moses had received in the mount, confirmed their commitment – “All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient.” So, after sprinkling the altar and the scroll, Moses then sprinkled the people to confirm their willing involvement. This changed everything.

In “Law and Grace” by W.F. Barling, the following comment is made – At once the situation changed fundamentally. No longer did their appointed representatives stand afar off (V.1) as a token that the people were estranged from God. The fence around the mount was now down. Approach to God was possible at last....there followed a sacrificial meal on the basis of the Covenant.

V.9-11 – “Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel...and they saw the God (*Elohim*) of Israel: and there was under **his feet** as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness” – While there may have been other angels present, the reference to “his feet” indicates that this was “the angel which spake to him (Moses) in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us” (Acts 7:38). The fact that the record says “upon the nobles of the children of Israel **he** laid not his hand” shows that this was the personal representative of Yahweh (“the angel of His presence” – Isa. 63:9) referred to in Ex. 23:20-23 who had power to condemn sin. Sin being absent, they enjoyed a fellowship meal with Yahweh on behalf of the nation.

V.12-18 – “Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them” – Moses continued on upwards with Joshua who went part way with him. He was then covered by a cloud on the mount that obscured God’s glory for six days (6 millennia in the type – 2 Pet. 3:8), but the seventh day brought a new era (the Millennium). As a type of Christ who would also share a meal with his disciples after his resurrection and then ascended into heaven, Moses disappeared into the cloud entering into the glory on the mount and was absent for 40 days and nights – a probation period. He, like Christ after him, had gone into ‘heaven’ to receive the pattern of the Tabernacle (the figure of the true ecclesia – Heb. 9:1-9). The type is firmly established.

Exodus 25 – Materials for the Tabernacle

V.1-2 – “**Speak** unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it **willingly** with his heart ye shall take my offering” – Moses was given the key message for the provision of the materials that would make up this representation of Christ’s ecclesia. Firstly, it was an appeal, not a command (“speak”), and secondly there needed to be willingness – “every man that giveth it willingly with his heart.” There can be no involvement in the glory to be revealed without willing commitment in service to God. God is not interested in conscripts who must be compelled by law to serve.

V.3-7 – A wide range of materials brought out of Egypt was required to build the Tabernacle and its furniture, just as we have been drawn out of ‘spiritual Egypt’ to have a part in the dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16), hence, V.8 – “And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”

The instructions given to Moses in the mount (like Christ in heaven) for the construction of the Tabernacle begin with its most important piece of furniture – The Ark of the Covenant (V.10-22) where the Shekinah glory would sit above the Mercy Seat (Christ) observed by the Cherubim (the saints in glory), and spoke of the presence of God among His people. The table for the

shewbread came next (V.23-30) for it spoke of Israel's fellowship with their God. The golden lampstand came next (V.31-39) with its related equipment for this represented the ecclesia giving light to a dark place through the oil of the Word. The final verse (V.40) is a repeated salutatory warning (V.9) that men cannot design their own religion. Everything to do with the worship of Yahweh had to be constructed in accordance with the pattern fixed in heaven (cp. 1 Chron. 28:12,18-19; Heb. 8:5 – "Moses was admonished of God").

Psalm 78 – Tell it to the generation following

V.1 – **"Maschil of Asaph.** Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth" – Careful readers of the psalms of Asaph will know that he often spoke in parables. He speaks here, under inspiration, on behalf of God for the purpose of instruction and consequent understanding by God's people, but there is a price tag, namely, **sacrifice** (Isa. 55:1 – "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath **no money**; come ye, **buy**, and eat....Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live" – time and effort are required to understand the deep things of God's Word – cp. Isa. 55:8-9 – "my thoughts are not your thoughts"). This is why Christ spoke in parables to his generation – "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." Surely though, God must want all to understand His Word so that they might not perish (John 3:16-17). Yes, He does, but He can only save those who really want to be saved, and they demonstrate that by a diligent and persistent effort to understand the teachings of the Word. They start out as babes desiring "the sincere milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2:2), but must move on to "strong meat" as the Apostle chided deficient Hebrews – "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need **milk**, not **solid food**, for everyone who lives on milk is **unskilled** in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the **mature**, for those who have their powers of discernment **trained** by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" (ESV for Heb. 5:12-14).

V.2-8 – "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us" – The parables and "dark sayings" are not things that were never known (Ps. 49:4; Prov. 1:6), for they had been passed down by their fathers. The problem was that their descendants had ceased to search and enquire (1 Pet. 1:10-11 – "Of which salvation the prophets have **enquired** and **searched diligently**.... **Searching** what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify"), and so they had lost the understanding of their diligent fathers. This is what Christ meant when he spoke of a "householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things **new and old**" (Matt. 13:52). The "new" things were not new in the sense that they had never been known, only that they had been lost by a new generation and needed restoration. Hence, there was a great need to avoid the pitfall of former generations and ensure they did "not hide them from their children" but "that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children." The purpose of diligent education was that they "might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose **spirit** (attitude) was not stedfast with God." It was for that reason Christ spoke in parables and dark sayings which were not understood by the rebellious and stubborn (many of them Judaizers).

V.9-72 are a recounting of how God redeemed Israel out of Egypt and the blessings He bestowed upon them in the wilderness and in the Land and their many attendant failures. What was the cause of this? After 215 years in Egypt, Israel had become far removed from their God.

They had their traditions of course, but a serious lack of diligence under harsh slavery saw the education of their children lapse for so long that, as at a later time, “there arose another generation after them, which knew not Yahweh” (Judges 2:10). These are embraced by the charge of V.37 – “For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.”

The psalm ends with reference to God choosing David to shepherd His people. There was no one in the O.T. more spiritually attuned to the mind of God than David. It is for that reason he is called a man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).

Mark 10

V.1-12 – The Lord went to the eastern side of Jordan followed by many whom he taught assiduously. However, the omnipresent Pharisees pressed their loose views on divorce and remarriage on him. What followed provides clarity on the Lord’s teachings concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage that have been confused by incorrect interpretations of the so-called “Exceptional Clause” of Matt. 19. Consistent with his teaching in Matt. 5:27-28, and the Apostle’s teaching in Rom. 7:1-4, even thinking about remarriage while one has a living partner is adultery. It should be noted in Rom. 7:3-4 there is no equivalent in the Greek text for the KJV’s “married.” It should be translated “if she be **for** another man.” Paul is presenting the case of believing Jews, who though now in Christ, wanted to continue living under the Law of Moses. It was like they still had a living “husband” (the Law). That was spiritual adultery. The perfect consistency of this argument lies in the fact that we are not yet married to Christ, only espoused to him (2 Cor. 11:2). A postscript to this, and consistent with it, is the fact that in verse 29 the RSV, Rotherham, the ASV and other translations do not include “wife” in the list of those who are “left” for the truth’s sake.

V.12-31 – The next incident where the Lord rebukes his disciples for forbidding children being brought unto him lays the foundations for his encounter with the rich young ruler. Christ loved (*agapao*) this young man (V.21). He wanted to save him. To the question “Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life,” the Lord firstly reminds the young man that there is no good thing in man, and then lists 6 of the 10 commandments which he knew the young man had kept. The Sabbath (4th) is not mentioned for that was taken for granted for Jews, but the absence of the first three was an indication of this man’s problem. He had another god in his life, namely, wealth (i.e. 1st commandment broken). He had graven images in his life, namely, money, things (i.e. 2nd commandment broken). He had taken upon himself service to God that would prove in the end to be “vain” and fruitless (the true meaning of the 3rd commandment). The lesson was clear – rich men can be saved, but only if their trust is not in the things that pertain to the present.

There are two Greek words in Mark 10 translated “way.” They are quite different. In V.21 Christ tells the rich young ruler to “go thy way.” The word is *hupago* – to withdraw oneself; to depart. However, in V.17 and again in V.32 the word is *hodos* – a travelled way; a road. This was the ‘way’ the Lord wanted all men to tread as he made his own ‘way’ to Jerusalem to be crucified (V.33-34). The rich young ruler was not in that ‘way’, but Bartimaeus was. In the enacted parable that begins in V.46 (to be considered with Mark 11), having received his sight (truth), he “followed Jesus in **the way**” (*hodos*). The preceding phrase in V.52 “Go thy **way**” is *hupago* and should simply be rendered “Go.” No one enlightened (cured of blindness) is counselled to ‘go their own way’. It is the way of the cross (V.32) in which we must walk (Mark 8:34).

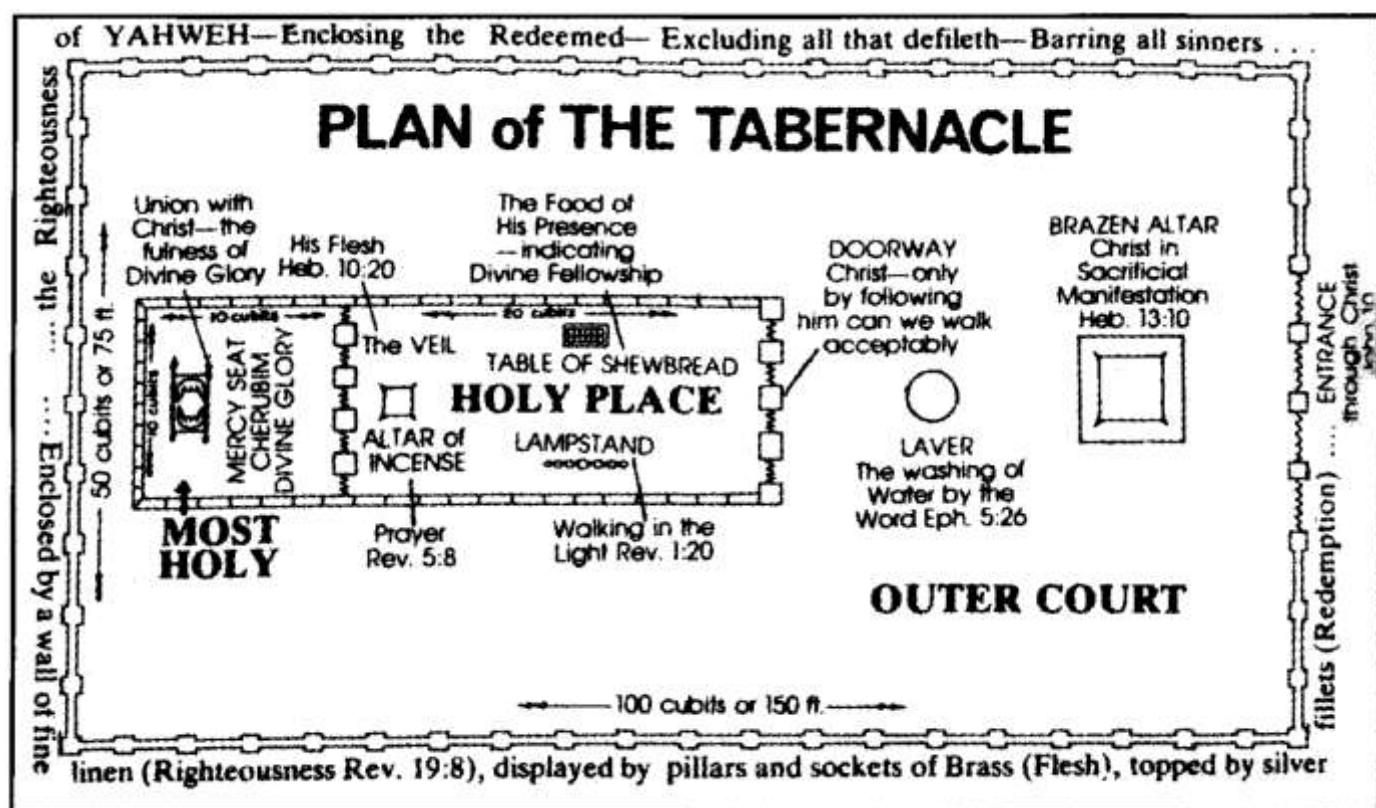
V.35-45 – The expectation that the Kingdom would soon come resulted in some premature requests being made – “James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.” The request was that James and John be given the privilege of sitting at right and left of Christ in his

Kingdom. It was a gob-smacking request and the Lord responded, "Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" to which they replied, "We can." They would indeed suffer with Christ, but the request was premature. This did not go down well with the other disciples who themselves had been jostling for prominent places in the Kingdom (Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46; 22:24). Gentiles wrestled for dominance over others. That was not to be the character of his disciples – "But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister." The greatest of all servants was the Lord himself – "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." There is a lesson here for possessors of human nature.

February 15

Exodus 26 – The design of the Tabernacle coverings

The chapter opens with instructions concerning the ten curtains of the tabernacle, their loops of blue and clasps of gold, which were to form the ceiling of the '*mishkan*,' the dwelling place of Yahweh. Next were described the eleven curtains of goat's hair that formed part of the tent of the tabernacle, its covering, and then the record moves on to three other coverings that were to lie one on top of the other above the goat's hair tent covering. The gold-covered boards in their sockets of silver were next brought under consideration, and their supports by which the walls were to be firmly fixed together. Finally, instructions were given as to the placing of the furniture and the hanging of the veil.



The framework of the tabernacle proper was 4.5 by 18 metres (15 ft by 45 ft). Its ceiling was made up of the curtains of fine twined linen upon which were embroidered blue, purple, and scarlet cherubim. Each of the ten curtains was 12 x 2 metres (42 ft x 6 ft), and they were coupled together in groups of five, making two large coverings, each 1280 cm x 915 cm (42 x 30 ft). On the 12 metre (40 ft) borders of these curtains were placed fifty loops of blue, so that the two lines of blue loops exactly corresponded with each other. These were linked together by

golden clasps on hooks so as to form one large covering, approximately 12 x 18 metres (42 x 60 ft). This large curtain was to be placed over the holy structure so as to form the ceiling of the tabernacle. It is always called the *mishkan* or tabernacle, whereas the other coverings were given the name of *ohel* or tent of the tabernacle. The ceiling was placed on top of the gold coated boards so that it draped over the sides and back. This was done so that the loops of the two pieces of the curtain were placed exactly above the division formed by the veil which divided the Holy from the Most Holy (see V.33).

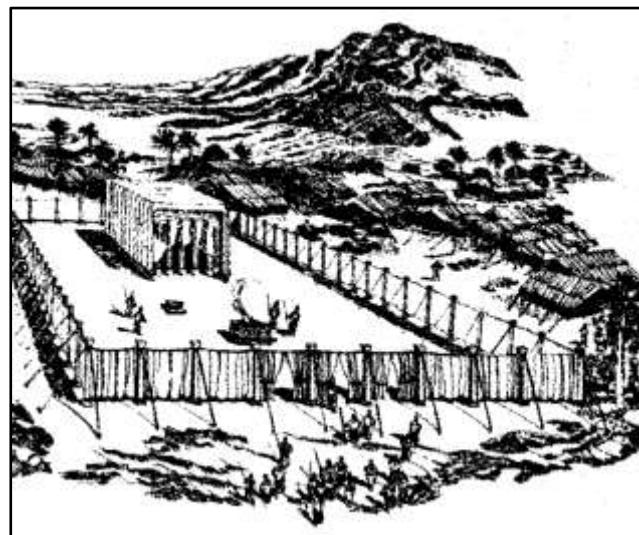
The ceiling, or covering of the tabernacle represented Christ (both personal and multitudinous) in resurrectional glory. In that regard, the preponderance of “five” (the number of grace) in the measurements given should be noted. Consider the fivefold titles of the Lord as

Prince and Priest in relation to the Redeemed. The former are given in Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a son is given....and his name shall be called (1) Wonderful, (2) Counsellor, (3) the Mighty Warrior (Heb. *gibbor*), (4) the Father of the Age; (5) the Prince of Peace.” The latter are set forth in Heb. 7:26, “For such an high priest became us, who is (1) holy, (2) harmless, (3) undefiled, (4) separate from sinners, and made (5) higher (like the ceiling) than the (Mosaic) heavens.”

The materials listed in this chapter teach their own very important spiritual lessons. Fine twined linen is the symbol of righteousness in action (Rev. 19:8). The “blue (heaven), and purple (royalty), and scarlet” (flesh/sin), represent the way God would ultimately redeem (silver) His people by tried faith (gold) through the overcoming of human nature (brass) by one bearing our nature which is biased towards sin (scarlet – Isa. 1:18), through his devotion to his Father’s will (blue). The perfect manifestation of God by Christ produced a royal king-priest who, with his saints, is wonderfully portrayed in the Tabernacle and its furniture.

Psalm 79 – How long, O Yahweh?

V.1 – **A Psalm of Asaph.** O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps” – Commentators wrestle with the problem of identifying a background to this psalm as they have with most of the psalms of Asaph. Their first problem is that it is quite evident these psalms were written by the Asaph of David’s time and not by others, centuries later, using his name. Those who insist on the background being the times of Hezekiah and the Assyrian invasion are beset with insoluble problems. For example, Sennacherib did not defile the temple, nor did he lay “Jerusalem on heaps.” There must be a different answer. And there is, exactly the same as for Psalms 74 through 77. Asaph, under inspiration, is looking into the future and his words are a prophecy of the terrible things that were to overtake God’s people in the future when the Babylonian invasion saw the temple defiled and destroyed. Similarly, the terrible desecrations of the Greeks in the days of the Maccabees and beyond that of the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in AD 70 may all be in view. That is the power and scope of inspiration. It is not restricted to past events as background. This is illustrated by a number of psalms of David (e.g. Ps. 16; Ps. 22, etc.) where he speaks of experiences that were not his own, but projected to those of Messiah (see 1 Pet. 1:10-12 – “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” for “not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the



things, which are now reported unto you"). Once this approach is accepted, all difficulties of attempting to align everything with a **past historical event** are removed.

V.2-3 – "Their blood have they shed like water **round about Jerusalem** (note V.2 – "dead bodies of **thy** servants"); and there was none to bury them" – The Assyrians did not do this, for they themselves became corpses (2 Kings 19:35) before firing a shot. However, the Babylonians, Greeks and Romans did in turn down through the centuries, and so will Gog.

V.4-9 – "We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us" – That was certainly true of Israel and Judah historically after invasions and captivity. The balance of the psalm is in the form of an appeal for ultimate deliverance from all Israel's enemies – "How long, Yahweh? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?" How would that be possible? – "Pour out thy wrath upon the **nations** that have not known thee, and upon the **kingdoms** that have not called upon thy name." This automatically precludes confining the psalm to one historical incident. The redemption of Israel will come at the time when Christ returns to overthrow all nations and kingdoms, when "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:26) consistent with the appeals, "remember not against us former iniquities" (V.8), and "purge away our sins, for thy name's sake" (V.9).

V.10-13 – (Rotherham) "Wherefore should the nations say—Where is their God? Let him be known among the nations before our eyes! Yea! By the avenging of the blood of thy servants which hath been shed!" – It will be by the avenging of the unrequited blood shed in the past that Yahweh will be known by all nations in the future (Joel 3:21 – "For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for Yahweh dwelleth in Zion"). Finally, Israel will be redeemed — "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations" (V.13).

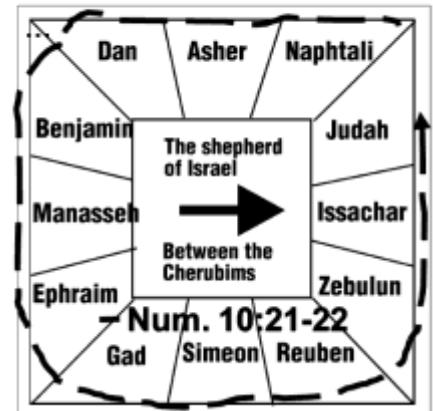
The subscription to Ps. 79 is found in the superscription of Ps. 80 – "To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth." The reference is to 'lily (or lilies) of testimony' and was used of psalms commemorating the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. *Shoshannim* was used because Pentecost was considered to constitute the conclusion of the Passover period, and *eduth* was used because Pentecost commemorated the giving of the Law at Mt Sinai.

Psalm 80 – Cause thy face to shine and we shall be saved

V.1 – "To the chief Musician upon Shoshannimeduth, **A Psalm of Asaph**. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 79 (as noted above). This wonderful psalm by Asaph reflects on Yahweh bringing His people Israel out of Egyptian bondage and planting them in His Land as a vine. The repeated phrases "shine forth," "make thy face to shine" and "turn us again" provide the keys to understanding. Due to repeated failure by Israel, only one antidote was available – the appearance of "the son of the right hand" made strong for Yahweh (V.17). In setting forth the work of this one, a remarkable thing is done in V.2. The Spirit through Asaph switches the camping and marching order

Leading Joseph – Psalm 80:1-2

The Psalmist places **Benjamin** (**Son of the right hand = Christ v.17**) between **Manasseh** and **Ephraim** representing natural and spiritual Israel – **Jew and Gentile in the family of God.**



of Israel in the wilderness (as illustrated above) around to place Benjamin between Ephraim and Manasseh. This places “the son of the right hand” directly behind the Tabernacle when Israel camped, and in particular, closest to the Most Holy place from which Yahweh shone forth from between the cherubims. Yahweh was to shine forth brilliantly in the son of His right hand (John 1:14). This disposition of Benjamin (“the son of the right hand”) being between Manasseh (representing natural Israel under law) and Ephraim (representing the inclusion of Gentiles in the Israel of God), set forth the work and mission of Christ to both Jew and Gentile.

V.8-16 – “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the nations, and planted it” – The chequered history of Israel after their redemption from Egypt permeates this psalm because of its apostasy and waywardness. The psalmist calls upon Yahweh to intervene – “Turn us again and make thy face to shine” upon us like the true Nazarites we should be (Num. 6:25 – “Yahweh make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee”). But there was only to be one perfect Nazarite.

V.17-19 – “Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand (Benjamin), upon **the son of man** whom thou madest strong for thyself” – The second use of the title “the son of man” (the first being Ps. 8:4) emphasizes that the answer to the problem of the sinfulness of human nature was to raise up one who could exercise dominion over it through being God’s son. The title “the Son of man” used by Christ 84 times of himself in the four Gospel records is not primarily about him sharing humanity with us, but about his God-given strength to overcome its bias towards evil, and to destroy it on the cross (see comments on Ps. 8 on January 3). The comments on Luke 5 are copied below for clarity on this critically important title:

Luke 5:24 is one of the 84 occurrences in the Gospel accounts of the title “the Son of man” that the Lord uses concerning himself. Perhaps surprising to some is that he only calls himself “the son of God” four times in those records. We automatically think that the title “the Son of man” is a reference to Christ’s mortal likeness to ourselves. That is a limited view. The title is drawn from Ps. 8:4 and 80:17. Ps. 8 was written by David after the slaying of Goliath. He foresaw in this event the victory of Christ over sin and death (hence, Ps. 8 features prominently in Heb. 2). The title refers to Christ’s delegated authority from his Father to conquer all carnal things. A simple checking of the context wherever the title occurs will confirm this fact. That is why he said to the palsied man “thy sins be forgiven thee” and “take up thy bed and walk” as he was delegated to have authority over all carnal things (Ps. 8:6; 80:17).

It will be Christ and his saints (particularly Elijah and his companions – Zech. 9:14; Matt. 24:31) called here Yahweh Tz’vaoth (“He who will become armies”) who will ultimately turn Israel around so that V.19 can be a reality – “Turn us again, O Yahweh Tz’vaoth, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

Mark 11 – An enacted parable of the call of the Gentiles

Mark wrote for Romans, so his record focuses on the inclusion of Gentiles in the purpose of God. The enacted parable of Christ riding into Jerusalem on a Sabbath, the 10th of Abib, is introduced in Mark 10:45 with the declaration that he came “to give his life a ransom for (the) many.” On arrival in Jericho (“the city of palm trees” – a symbol for the nations – Ex. 15:27; Rev. 7:9), blind Bartimaeus (“the son of the unclean” – the Jewish view of Gentiles) appealed to Christ to be cured of his blindness. His name curiously appears twice in a different form – a way of emphasizing his complete separation from salvation. He may have been a Jew, but he is presented as a Gentile. His perception of Jesus as the son of David reveals a faith absent in many Jews. The beggar (lowest in society) is howled down by many, but persists with his loud appeals. Christ paused on his journey to the cross to heal this man who then followed Jesus “in the way” as many enlightened Gentiles have done since.

There are three trees in **Mark 11:1**. The Lord comes to the Mount of **Olives** (symbol for both Jew and Gentile – Zech. 4:3; Rom. 11:17); Bethphage to which they arrive first means “the house of unripe **figs**” = symbol for Israel; from which Christ sent two disciples to Bethany – “the house of date **palms**” = the Gentile nations. So it was that Christ first came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and then sent his Apostles to the Gentiles. Every verse that follows is pregnant with the call of the Gentiles. Christ seeks only a colt. There is no mention here of the ass of Zech. 9:9 as in Matt. 21:7. The Spirit in Mark only focuses on the unbroken colt pointing to the Gentiles. It is found ‘outside the house’ in “a place where **two ways** met” (Jew and Gentile), and is tied up (locked up in sin). That was the state of Gentiles in relation to the things of God. The Lord had “need of him” for it had always been God’s plan to call Gentiles, and he knew there would be an immediate response – V.3 “straightway.” Hence, **palm** branches (symbol for the nations – Rev. 7:9) were strewn in the way as Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem on the 10th of Abib (John 12:13) to be inspected as the Passover lamb for the salvation of all who would come to him. The crowd sang the words of Ps. 118:25-26 – “Hosanna” (‘save now’), but the Lord’s mind was on the preceding verse in the psalm (V.24) – “This is **the day** which Yahweh hath made, we will be glad and rejoice in it.” This is a reference to the “**day**” of the Millennium – the Sabbath day for which he was dying 5 days later that it might be made sure by grace.

On inspecting the temple, he declared it a leprous house and went to reside in Bethany (= Gentiles). Next day he cursed a fruitless **fig tree** (Israel) which only had a fig leaf covering like Adam and Eve – a religion of their own invention. Fig leaves are preceded by a bud at the end of winter. That bud is the incipient fruit and can be eaten, if necessary, though quite bitter. A fig tree with leaves must by order of nature have some fruit (fit for repentance), but Israel did not. Consequently, men would not eat fruit from Israel until the end of the Gentile age (*aion*).

Next the Lord cleansed the Jewish traders from the Court of the Gentiles and stopped all activity of the Mosaic order for a while, indicating its imminent demise in AD 70. In response to Peter’s observation that the fig tree had dried up from the roots, Christ laid down the constitution of the new Abrahamic order – “Have faith in God.” It is a faith that can say to the Mount of Olives (“this mountain”), “be thou removed and cast into the sea” as it will be when the great earthquake of Zech. 14:5 occurs, with absolute confidence that it will be fulfilled. Those with that kind of faith will be there to witness it on that day, providing that their earnest prayers for the fulfillment of God’s purpose is matched by a readiness to forgive those who may have trespassed against them – V.25-26.

V.27-33 – While teaching in the temple, the chief priests, scribes and the elders of the people demanded of him – “By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?” This disingenuous question is brilliantly dealt with by turning it back on them – “The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.” This presented a real snare for them. If they said of John that he was sent from heaven, then Jesus would ask “Why did ye not then believe him?” If they said he was not sent by God, the people would stone them. Because they wouldn’t accept John, they would not make a positive decision about Christ – “Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

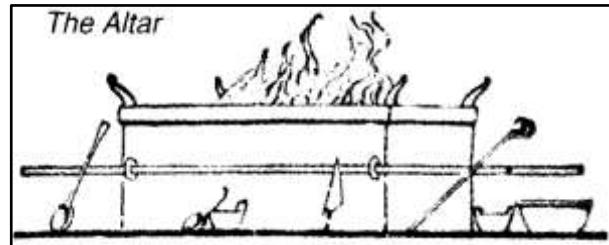
February 16

Exodus 27 – The court of the brazen altar

The court outside the tabernacle emphasized the need of flesh to make proper preparation before entering this holy place. Most prominent of its furniture was the great brazen altar that stood immediately in line with the entrance of the court and that of the Tabernacle. It barred the way to worshippers, who first must present their offerings unto Yahweh in the manner specified. Moses was instructed how all this was to be constructed. He was given details concerning the

linen fence that was to enclose the Sanctuary; the gate of the court through which entrance was gained thereto; and the oil for the lamps which it was the responsibility of every Israelite to contribute.

V.1-8 detail the size, design and features of the brazen altar of sacrifice and all its attendant



equipment and the means of its carriage. The first principle taught about approaching Yahweh was the need for sacrifice. The altar was made of acacia wood, representing human nature: that is, human nature shaped according to a Divine pattern, and therefore pointing forward to Christ “our altar” (Heb. 13:10). Atonement had to be made for the altar (Ex. 29:36), and accordingly, in the antitype, the Lord, though sinless, also “had somewhat to offer,” for he, in common with all humanity, needed redemption from the nature he bore (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 2:14; 8:3; 7:27).

V.9-19 provide detail of the outer ‘fence’ around the Tabernacle compound of “hangings for the court of fine twined linen” and the attendant posts with their brass sockets and silver fillets. The “gate of the court” was to be of “blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.” As noted above, the colours represented God manifest in Jesus Christ who is the door of God’s house (John 10:9). The court was primarily a barrier, preventing unlawful approach, and so protected the worship of Yahweh against defilement. It represented a clear line of demarcation emphasizing the separateness which is an essential feature of acceptable worship. It made clear the way of approach, teaching Israelites to realize that Yahweh dictated the terms of worship.

V.20-21 – “thou shalt **command** the children of Israel, that they bring thee **pure oil olive** beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” – Every Israelite was to contribute to the light of the Lampstand within the Holy Place, just as each member of ecclesial lampstands should do so (“Ye are the light of the world” – Matt. 5:14). This was not optional, it was a command. The purer the oil, the brighter the light. Diligent reading and study of the Word of God (“pure oil”) was being enjoined upon the “Israel of God.”

Psalm 81 – The need to rejoice in the Rock of our salvation

V.1-4 – “**To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph.** Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 80. This psalm of Asaph is a call for Israel to restore the freshness of their deliverance from Egypt which had been forgotten by many generations. The nation is called to make the most of the new moon which in the first month Abib/Nisan heralded the feast of the Passover, and of the new moon in the seventh month (Tishri) that heralded the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles at which there needed to be genuine rejoicing at the remembrance of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt – “and ye shall **rejoice** before Yahweh your God seven days” (Lev. 23:39-43) – This became “a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.” The equivalent for us is to continually remember our deliverance from the slavery of ‘spiritual Egypt’ and rejoice over it. We are able to do this regularly in the feast we keep (Acts 2:46; 1 Cor. 5:8) to remember Christ’s sacrifice, “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and **rejoice** in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2).

V.5-7 – “This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not” – The deliverance from Egypt now becomes the centrepiece of the psalm. We read a similar thing in Ps. 114:1 – “When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language.” The ‘language’ of Egypt, spiritually speaking, was far removed from God’s ‘language.’ Yahweh saved

“Joseph” (the first to go to Egypt as a slave) and “removed his shoulder from the burden” by calling Joseph’s brethren out of the house of sin and death 215 years later. Yahweh saved them in times of crisis (e.g. at the Red Sea) and “answered (them) in the secret place of thunder” (i.e. at Mt Horeb), and “proved (them) at the waters of Meribah” twice (Ex. 17:7; Num. 20:13).

V.9-12 – “There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god” – Both in the wilderness, and in the Land, Israel turned to strange gods – “Israel would none of me, so I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels.”

V.13-16 – “Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!” – What a difference that would have made, as the balance of the psalm goes on to show. Their enemies would have been subdued; “the haters of Yahweh” would have been forced into feigned obedience (as the word “submit” means – cp. Ps. 18:44; 63:3), and he would “have fed them also with the finest of the wheat (Ps. 147:14): and with **honey out of the rock**” (this is a citation from Deut. 32:13 – “He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck **honey out of the rock**”). The word “rock” is *tsûr* and is used five times in Deut. 32 of Yahweh as Israel’s Rock, as opposed to the false “rock” of pagan gods. There is a sweetness brought to life when Yahweh is the foundation of it.

Psalm 82 – ‘Mighty ones’ should rescue the weak and needy

V.1 – **A Psalm of Asaph.** God (*Elohim*) standeth in the congregation of the mighty (*EI*); he judgeth among the gods” (*Elohim*) – This psalm has the distinction of being quoted by Christ in John 10:34 in defense of his claim that he and his Father were “one” for which his adversaries charged him with blasphemy, thinking he made himself equal with God. Christ pointed out that Israel being Yahweh’s chosen nation, and having received His Word by the disposition of angels (Heb. 2:2), were in fact Elohim = mighty ones. Rulers and judges in Israel were called Elohim in places like Ex. 22:9,28. Recognition of this exalted position was completely absent from their thinking.

A familiar pattern in the psalms of Asaph appears here again. The first verse states a truth; the body of the psalm deals with the truth, and the final verse is a prayer based upon that truth.

V.2 – “How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” – Again, as has been Asaph’s practice, under inspiration, he looks down the corridor of Israel’s history to a time when God, through Christ and his saints would restore honesty and integrity in government – “Arise, O God (*Elohim*), judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit **all nations**.” Israel’s history had already been blighted by the endemic dishonesty of Israel’s judges. The sons of Samuel took bribes to pervert justice (1 Sam. 8:1-3), and the reign of Saul had seen injustice at the highest levels of government. David had restored integrity to the throne, but Asaph, guided by inspiration, saw a continuance of injustice as Israel’s history rolled on.

V.3-4 – His appeal to those responsible for dispensing justice was to “defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.” Doing right and upholding justice and integrity is the first thing God requires of His servants (Mic. 6:8).

V.5-7 – However, Asaph knew that this would not happen in the majority of cases – “They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness.” The indictments of the prophets verified the prophecy – “he looked for judgement, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry” (Isa. 5:7); “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely” (Jer. 6:13). How could **Elohim** (“children of the Most

High") "unto whom the word of God came" (John 10:35) act like this? They would "die like men, and fall like one of the princes" as they did when Divine judgements fell in AD 66-70.

V.8 – "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations" – The only real antidote for dishonesty and injustice on earth is the righteous rule of Christ. The government he will establish will be incapable of wrong-doing of any kind – "Give the king thy judgments, O God.... He shall judge thy people with righteousness" (Ps. 72:1).

Mark 12

V.1-12 – The parable of the vineyard is drawn from Isa. 5:1-7. Note the citations and allusions below (in bold blue):

Isa. 5:1 – "Now will I sing to my **wellbeloved** a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My **wellbeloved** (**Mark 12:6**) hath a **vineyard** (**Mark 12:1**) in a **very fruitful hill**:" (the underlined phrase is two words in the Hebrew – *ben shemen* – son, or family builder of oil = the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh – "Having yet therefore one son, his **wellbeloved**, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son" – **Mark 12:6**)

2 And he **fenced it** ("set an hedge about it" – **Mark 12:1**), and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also **made a winepress therein** ("digged a place for the winefat" – **Mark 12:1**): and he looked **that it should bring forth grapes** ("might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard" – **Mark 12:2**), and it brought forth wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah ("**husbandmen**" – **Mark 12:1,2,7,9**), judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

5 And now go to; I will tell you **what I will do to my vineyard** ("**What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?**" – **Mark 12:9**): I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:

6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgement, but **behold oppression** ("at him **they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.**" – **Mark 12:4-5**); for righteousness, but behold a cry.

V.13-17 – What follows are two attempts to destroy Christ by the Pharisees and the Herodians (the name of a political party among the Jews, which derived its name from the support it gave to the dynasty of Herod) who throw their best at him, but are humiliated. The mealy-mouthed introduction by the Pharisees on the propriety of paying taxes to the Romans, receives a curious response – "Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it," and when brought, "Whose is this image and superscription?" Stunned, they have no option but to say, "Caesar's" and were blown away when he said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." What could the say? "they marvelled at him."

V.18-27 – The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees humiliated, thought they could do better. They laid out a scenario involving the Levirate law about a woman who ended up having seven

brothers as her husbands who all died childless. "In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife," they asked, doubtless quite confident they had Jesus stumped. Sadducees, heavily Hellenized with Greek philosophy did not believe in the resurrection, or angels, but actually knew better – "Ye do err, **not** knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God." The word "not" here is *me* (the subjective negation – see below on V.24), and indicates that they did in fact "know the scriptures," but deliberately chose to ignore the implications of what they contained. The Lord's response was brilliant. Firstly, he points out that immortals in the Kingdom will not marry like the **angels** (which they did not believe in, but knew they existed because the Scriptures said so), and then hits them with, "And as touching the dead, that they **rise**: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err." God calls "those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

V.24 – "And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know **not** the scriptures, neither the power of God?" Another point for the technically minded. The Greek word in bold "not" in verse 24 is *me* – the subjective negation = no, not. There are two words in Greek for negation. The other is *ou* (you might see we derive two English words from these – namely, "me" and "you". "Me" is subjective, i.e. about yourself; whereas "you" is objective, i.e. someone else, not you! When these two words are used in tandem in the N.T. they represent an absolute negation – "No way" as we say. What significance might this have in the current context? The Lord is not referring to their ignorance of the O.T. Scriptures. He is exposing their deliberate rejection of them! By saying "Ye know not the scriptures" the Greek equivalent of what he said in his own language (the subjective negation), means they were willingly ignorant of what Exodus 3 taught. They had an inkling that God could only call Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob if they had a future existence on the principle of Rom. 4:17 – "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were," but they dismissed it out of hand in order to uphold their own Hellenist views of the resurrection (Acts 23:8).

V.28-34 – One of their scribes of the Law stepped forward thinking he could salvage something from the wreckage in favour of Judaism – "Which is the first commandment of all?" The Lord's citation of Deut. 6:5 would have been music to this scribe's ears, but the Lord was not finished and added, "And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." This scribe who had come with dubious motives as we learn from Matt. 22:34-35 and Luke 10:25 was nevertheless more amenable than the Pharisees and Sadducees. His intelligent and perceptive response was commended by Christ – "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Whether he ever escaped from Judaism and ritualism we do not know.

V.35-40 – After the scribe, "no man after that durst ask him any question." The time had come for his critics to be silenced. They 'knew' the Scriptures, but did not read them carefully enough. "How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, The LORD (Yahweh) said to **my Lord**, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?" (Ps. 110:1). All Jews knew that a son could not be lord to his father. End of story – Jesus was the Son of God – "the common people heard him gladly," and so he warned them of the scribes – "Beware of the scribes" whose religion was self-serving and hypocritical. They would be known by their fruits.

V.41-44 – As “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain **poor widow**, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing,” he took the opportunity to impress the truth of what the scribe had said in V.32-33 – “to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and **sacrifices**.” The widow could not have made a greater **sacrifice** than she had – “For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her **want** did cast in all that she had, even **all her living**.” For the rich and well-to-do it was no sacrifice at all. They were more interested in the loud clang as their coins clattered down the throat of one of the 13 metal sopherim (trumpet shaped opening of the money chests) causing everyone to look in amazement at their ‘generosity’ and ‘righteousness’ (Matt. 6:1-4).

February 17

Exodus 28

Aaron and his sons were selected to serve as priests. Until this time Moses had been the only mediator, but now Aaron’s family, rather than that of Moses, was chosen to minister before God for Israel. This had been previously implied from the instructions regarding the tending of the lamps. Now Aaron and his sons were to be set apart from the rest of Israel, being consecrated as priests. To that end, special holy garments for “glory and for beauty” were designed for their exclusive use. They were intended as an outward display of inward holiness and beauty of character which they represented. The appointment of priests through whom alone the people could approach Yahweh served to again illustrate the exclusiveness of worship. Brother Roberts observed in “The Law of Moses” pg. 154 – That God should dwell with men at all was esteemed by Solomon a great condescension on the part of a Being to whom it is humbling Himself “to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth” (Ps. 113:6)....Hence, familiar and indiscriminate approach was not invited: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me.” He would be approached in a consecrated and concealed recess, and that only once a year, and that only by blood shed, and that only presented by a man of His own choice, assisted by men of His own appointment, and attired in a way prescribed by Himself. Hence, the appointment of a priesthood, and the provision of special garments setting them aside from all others.

V.1 – “take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons” – Only the family of Aaron had the right to be priests (“no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” – Heb. 5:4). They were to be without blemish, and any disfigurement was to be a disqualification, though not for the eating of sacrifices (Lev. 21:17-23); they were to have no land inheritance, for Yahweh was to be their inheritance (Num. 18:12-20; 1 Chron. 23:13); they were to be custodians of the Law, teaching its precepts to the people (Mal. 2:7), and anyone seeking to usurp their position was to be executed – “the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” (Num. 18:7).

V.2-3 – “thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for **glory** and for **beauty**” – The garments of the high priest were designed to illustrate the character he was called upon to manifest. The saints as priests of a higher order (1 Pet. 2:9) are likewise to strive for characters that reflect glory and beauty (Gal. 5:22; 2 Pet. 1:3-8), whilst they “keep their garments unspotted from the world” (Isa. 61:10; James 1:27; Rev. 3:18). Bro. Roberts commented – “What do we see in this but the fact that glory and beauty are the attributes of Divine wisdom, whether we regard it intrinsically or in its living expression in all experience.”

The “garments” of the Bride of Psalm 45:13-14 are so represented, as, among other things, she is described as being “all glorious within.” The garments were to be made by the “wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom.” This too, taught that the beauty and glory was a product of God.

V.4-39 – The details of the high priest’s garments are extensive and too much for brief comment. The illustration at right will have to suffice for the time being. Every aspect taught lessons for acceptable worship before God.

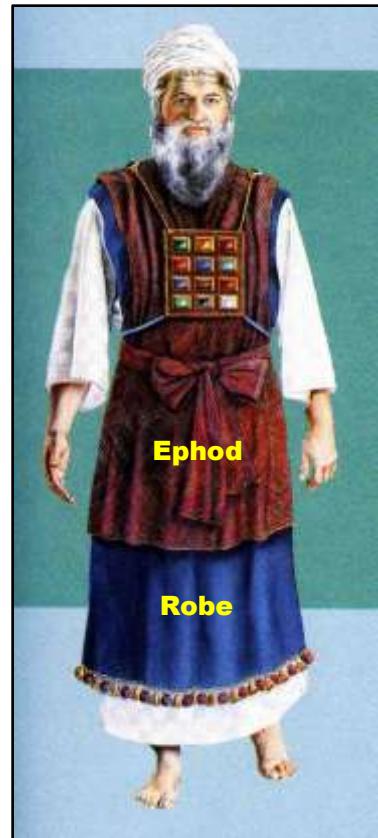
Highly significant were the primary materials to be employed in the garments – “they shall take **gold**, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen” (V.5). Gold is a symbol of tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7); blue (heaven) represents God manifestation; purple portrays royalty; and scarlet speaks of sin. All those elements are revealed in the parable of the priesthood, for by this means is sin overcome, and God’s authority and righteousness upheld, to His honour and glory.

The word “ephod” is the original Hebrew transliterated, and not translated into the English. Gesenius derives it from the root *aphad*, “to gird,” so that the word actually defines any “vestment” or “garment.” The **ephod** was a sort of waistcoat, consisting of two pieces, one to cover the chest and the other the back, joined together above the shoulders, set with precious stones, and united at the waist by a band, called “the curious girdle of the ephod.” This band was of one piece with the ephod, being woven on to it, passed around the body, and so fastened. The ephod was worn over the tunic and robe (V.31).

The two parts of the ephod were joined together on top of the shoulders, and above them, set in gold, were placed two large onyx stones, upon which were indelibly engraved the names of the children of Israel. They acted as a memorial, testifying to the indubitable future of Israel according to the purpose of Yahweh. The high priest carried the names of the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders as a burden to be borne.

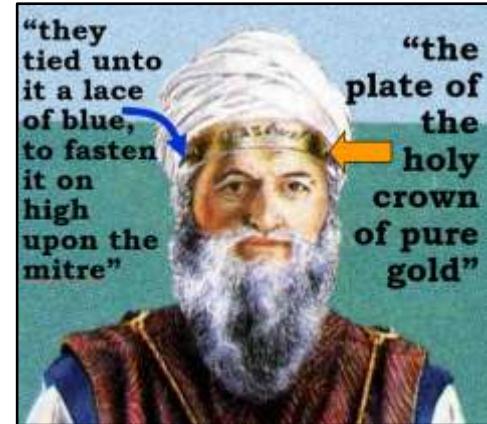
The **breastplate** of judgement (V.15-30) was among the most mysterious and significant objects of Divine worship. It was made of the same material as the ephod, but doubled over so as to form a **bag** (it contained within it the Urim and Thummim whereby Yahweh was consulted and the people informed concerning His will – see V.30). Two rings of gold were placed inwards at the bottom ends and two rings were attached opposite to the ephod just “above the skillfully woven band of the ephod,” and these were bound one to the other by a lace of blue. The wreathen chains, or ropes of gold, of the previous verses connected the breastplate to the ouches at the top of the breastplate. Thus, the ephod, the onyx stones, and the breastplate were all linked together, comprising the prophetic dress of the high priest (see 1 Sam. 14:3,18; 23:6; 30:7-8; 2 Sam. 2:1).

The **Robe** of the Ephod (V.31-35) was made of blue. There was a binding around the neck of it to prevent tearing, and the hem was ringed with multicoloured pomegranates, interspersed with golden bells that tinkled at the movements of the high priest performing his duties. The word “robe” is *meheel* and signifies covering. It was all blue (the colour of God manifestation), so identifying it with “the robe of righteousness” as part of “the garments of salvation” described by Isaiah (Isa. 61:10). The blue robe did not entirely cover the **linen coat** of V.39, for the white of the latter protruded below the blue of the former (see illustration above). This coat of fine linen was the innermost garment of the high priest, and therefore provided the foundation



for the other garments – a covering of the flesh in white. It was a gown worn directly over the drawers (according to Josephus (Ant. 3.7.2) these reached to the feet, and had tightly-fitting sleeves).

The “mitre” was a turban of white linen (Ex. 39:28), representing a crown of righteousness. Upon the forehead of the high priest, tied to the white mitre of righteousness, was affixed a band of gold displaying the simple declaration – “Holiness to Yahweh.” Thus, the gold of tried faith, ascribing holiness to Yahweh, was connected by the blue lace, reminding one of the obligations of obedience, to the white linen mitre, the crown of righteousness. And all were connected with the forehead, which should be yielded unto Yahweh. It was placed in such a position as to remind Israelites that ‘with the mind they should serve God’ (Rom. 7:25), and therefore the mind should be separated unto Him. When this is done, a person’s life will conform more closely to the Divine will. The mind exercises the most powerful influence in the body, and must be controlled by the Word, if the thinking of the spirit is to overcome that of the flesh (Rom. 8:6-8). The high priest wore the band of gold as a reminder of this. The Lord, our high priest, needed no such band, for his mind was constantly at one with that of his Father.



Aaron was thus, as the crowned priest, the microcosm of the people viewed as a dynasty of priests and a holy nation. Holiness was to be the entire nation’s pursuit and the constant preoccupation of its thinking (V.38).

In all of these ordinances the wonder and holiness of our great High Priest was foreshadowed – “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

V.40-43 – Similar garments, though not as elaborate as those for the high priest, were to be prepared for Aaron’s sons. One of the most important of these for all of the priests to wear (including Aaron) was “linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.” These covered the area around the generative organs, but being under other garments were only seen by God. This suggests that sexual irregularities should be excluded even in thought (Matt. 5:27-28). If the priest through forgetfulness, entered the sanctuary without this necessary article of clothing, and so risked an unseemly exposure of his person, he was to be accounted guilty, and risked the penalty of death. This taught that the greatest circumspection is necessary when approaching Yahweh in worship. Immodest dress, or the unseemly display of flesh, is most inappropriate, and believers should maintain the highest standards of attire when approaching the presence of the Almighty.

Psalm 83 – The destruction of Israel’s enemies at Armageddon

In recent times some have asserted that Ps. 83 prophesies a conflict between Israel and Iran prior to Armageddon. This is incorrect. It is in fact an Armageddon psalm. The psalm has clear references to the outcomes of Divine judgements that can only be post-Armageddon; e.g. V.18 – **“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is YAHWEH, art the most high over all the earth.”** The psalm contains the title El Elyon – El is used in V.1 (last word in the verse) and Elyon in V.18 (“most high”). Elyon occurs 53 times in the O.T. with over 30 as a title of Yahweh. Where this title is used in a context, invariably the themes are drawn from Gen. 14 where this Divine title first occurs four times and where Armageddon and the setting up of the Kingdom are revealed in great detail. A full set of Bible marking notes on Gen. 14 can be found in **Appendix 2**.

V.1 – **“A Song or Psalm of Asaph.** Keep not thou silence, O God (*Elohim*): hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God” (*EI*) – Typical of the psalms of Asaph, an appeal is made to God for the redemption of Israel, and what follows is an explanation of the crisis confronting the nation, and then the revelation of how it is overcome. As seen in previous psalms by Asaph, he looks deep into the future and sees the hand of Yahweh intervening to save His people from the destruction decreed against them by their inveterate enemies. The subscription of this psalm is found in the superscription of Ps. 84 – “To the chief Musician upon Gittith” (winepresses), and this projects to the time when Christ and the saints will tread “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” That conflict will start with Armageddon and continue for 40 years until all nations are subdued under Christ (Mic. 5:4-6; Rev. 14; Isa. 63:1-3; Rev. 18 and 19; etc.).

V.2-5 – “For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head” – Yahweh’s enemies “lift up their head” (*rosh*) cp. Ezek. 38:2. Gog (the dictator) is “prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal” (the entire northern continent of Eurasia). Gog will confederate all the territories once ruled by the four world empires of Dan. 2 and 7 and form them into Nebuchadnezzar’s image that is foreshadowed in Gen. 14 (see Appendix 2). This is foreshadowed in V.5 – “they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee.” Their aim is the total annihilation of the nation of Israel – “They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance” (V.4).

V.6-8 – 10 nations (“all nations” – Zech. 14:2) are listed as being involved in the conflict. They are headed by **Edom** (V.6). This is not the Edom of old, but the Edom of latter-day prophecy, namely Babylon the great (Isa. 34:5-10; see citation of Isa. 34:9-10 in Rev. 14:10-11; Isa. 34:11 is alluded to in Rev. 18:2. See also comments on Isa. 63:1-3 on July 7). The “Assur” of V.8 is Assyria and points to the latter Assyrian = Gog (Ezek. 38:2). The title “the Assyrian” is given to the latter-day invader of the Land of Israel in Isa. 10:5,24; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; Mic. 5:5,6. Bro. Thomas wrote in Eureka Vol. 1 pg. 46 – **Edom**, in the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel’s kingdom in “the latter days,” is representative of the enemies of Jacob, banded together under the guardianship of **Gog, who is then the Chief of the House of Esau.**

V.9-12 – The Midianites are mentioned because in the types of the Book of Judges they represent the Gogian confederacy and its destruction by Christ and the saints who are represented by Gideon and his faithful 300. In verse 11, Oreb and Zeeb are types of the Gogian confederacy destroyed in the Land, and Zebah and Zalmunna are types of Babylon the great who are destroyed outside the Land. The Midianites are also mentioned in Isa. 9:4 in the context of Armageddon and the setting up of the Kingdom. This is firm proof that Ps. 83 is also about Armageddon. Similarly, in verse 9, Sisera and Jabin of Judges 4 and 5 are types of the overthrow of the Gogian confederacy as is revealed in Ps. 68:18,21; cp. Judges 5:12.

V.13-18 – (LITV) “O my God, make them as whirling dust, as the **stubble** before the wind” – The same word for “stubble” is used in Mal. 4:1 in the context of Armageddon. The figure of a whirlwind is also used in that context in Jer. 30:23-24 – “Behold, the **whirlwind** of Yahweh goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of Yahweh shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in **the latter days** ye shall consider it.” This description accords with V.15 – “So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.” The nations who sought Israel’s destruction will “be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish” (V.17), all for the purpose – “That men may know that, thou, Whose Name alone is Yahweh, Art Most High over all the earth” (Rotherham for V.18).

Psalm 84 – A day in thy courts is better than a thousand

V.1 – “To the chief Musician upon Gittith, **A Psalm for the sons of Korah.** How amiable are thy tabernacles (*mishkān* – residence), O Yahweh of hosts!” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 83. The ESV, RSV, ASV and most other translations have “A Psalm **of** the Sons of Korah.” The sons of Korah were given a special role in the Tabernacle and the Temple because of their faithfulness in separating from their rebellious father in the wilderness (Num. 26:11 – “Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not”). Their role was at the gates – “the Korahites, were over the work of the service, **keepers of the gates** of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of Yahweh, were **keepers of the entry.**” They guarded access to the presence of God. They knew how pleasant it was to be in Yahweh’s courts. The word “amiable” is *yedîyd* and means “lovely.”

V.2 – (Rotherham) “My soul, longeth—yea even languisheth—for the courts of Yahweh,— My heart and my flesh, shout aloud for a Living GOD” – There may have been a time when the writer of this psalm spent a considerable amount of time outside the Temple. We know it was the Temple because it had courts, an altar, and walls over which birds could fly and find a place to create a nest. It is called a *mishkān* meaning a residence, and though this is the word used of the Tabernacle, it is translated “dwellingplaces” many times and is used of the Temple of the future Age in Ezek. 37:27. The psalmist was pining to be able to enter Yahweh’s courts again after an absence. It is even possible that that absence was simply overnight.

V.3-4 – “Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars” – The Temple gates were shut at dusk by the sons of Korah serving at the time. They could not go back in until dawn the following day. This man did not want to go home to his residence as is indicated in V.10, which he describes as “the tents of lawlessness” (Rotherham). It is evident he stood outside the Temple watching the sparrows and swallows flying over the wall to settle down for the night. He envied them. They could go into God’s House at any time, and they even had secure places for their young. He was outside and he wanted to be inside praising his God – “How happy are they who abide in thy house,—Still are they praising thee” (Rotherham for V.4), for the sons of Korah also had a role in singing in the choirs in the Temple (1 Chron. 6:31-37)

V.5 – (RSV) “Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the highways to Zion” – Most reliable translations are quite different to the KJV and support the RSV. There are echoes here from the experiences of Jehoshaphat in both 2 Chron. 20 and 2 Kings 3. In the former, Judah were saved by praise as they went to war (2 Chron. 20:19-23 – “the **Korhites**, stood up to praise Yahweh God of Israel with a loud voice on high”), and after assembling in the valley of Berachah (“blessing”) to offer thanksgiving and praise (2 Chron. 20:26), they took the **highway** back to **Zion** rejoicing (2 Chron. 20:27) “and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto **the house of Yahweh**” (2 Chron. 20:28). Perhaps the writer of this psalm was there as one of the singers.

V.6 – (LITV) “Passing through the valley of weeping (*bâkâ’*), they will make it a fountain; even the early rain covers with blessings” or as the KJV – “the rain also filleth the pools”) – The echoes here are from Jehoshaphat’s stressful time in 2 Kings 3 when again foolishly in alliance with Jehoram king of Israel (son of Ahab) and the king of Edom in a war against Moab, their armies almost perished from lack of water (2 Kings 3:5-10). Elisha the prophet emerged at Jehoshaphat’s desperate plea, “Is there not here a prophet of Yahweh.” Elisha repudiated Jehoram and said, “were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee,” and immediately added for Jehoshaphat’s benefit – “But now bring me a **minstrel**.” He was reminding Jehoshaphat of the victory won purely by praise in 2 Chron. 20. Under the influence

of the music provided by the minstrel, Elisha prophesied, “Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts,” and on cue, rain some distance away turned up along the wadis to fill ‘the valley of weeping’ with many pools (2 Kings 3:20), so it too became a valley of blessing.

It was these victories, given to Jehoshaphat because of praise, that allowed him to recover from the heavy blows received from his foolish alliances with the house of Ahab, and return to Zion to praise his God (V.8) – (LITV) “They go from strength to strength, being seen in Zion before God” (V.7).

V.9-12 – “Behold, O God our shield, and **look upon the face** (*paneh* – the face) of thine anointed” – Yahweh had looked on the face of Jehoshaphat through Elisha (2 Kings 3:14 – “were it not that I regard the presence (*paneh* – the face) of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah,” and had been a shield to him.

Rotherham for V.10 – “For better is a day in thy courts, than a thousand, I choose rather to **stand at the threshold in the house** of my God, Than to dwell in the tents of lawlessness” – This son of Korah whose heart was bursting to be back inside the house of God stood and watched the birds flying over the wall at dusk when he had been put outside the gates (V.3), looked down to the houses in the city and decided it would better to stay at the threshold of the Temple than to go home. There were things going on there that he didn’t like. These are indicated by the word “dwell” for it is *dûr* and means to gyrate (or move in a circle) with the idea of dwelling. However, the activities there were not governed by God’s principles, for they were “tents (*ohel*) of lawlessness,” and therefore the temporary, fruitless and vain abodes of those who did not see Yahweh as “a sun and shield” or the giver of “grace and glory,” a God who would not withhold any good thing “from them that walk uprightly.”

Mark 13

Mark 13 is one of three records of the **Olivet Prophecy**. The following harmony of the three records will assist understanding.

Bro. H.P. Mansfield wrote – It is quite certain, that neither Matthew, Mark or Luke have recorded all the words of Christ. Matthew and Mark, for instance, omit the explanatory passage of Luke 21:24, and Luke omits some statements recorded by Matthew and Mark. Each set down those features of the Olivet prophecy relevant to their individual purpose, and it is only by placing the three accounts side by side that the true picture is seen.

Bro. H.P. Mansfield also wrote – It is also certain that there is a link between the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Gentiles now impending; the one is the type of the other, and for that reason, we believe, these events were grouped together so closely in Christ’s Olivet prophecy, and expounded in language so similar.

The view of some that the Olivet Prophecy is all about AD 70 with no relation to the Second Advent of Christ is not supported by any of the writings of our Pioneers. In fact, in an article by Bro. Thomas in 1855 he roundly castigates and rejects the notion that it could be only about AD 70.

If further proof is required that Bro. Thomas understood the Olivet Prophecy to be about two eras (AD 70 and Christ’s Second Advent) then reference to the article in the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come – 1861 pages 176-178 in Appendix 3 provides it.

The Olivet Prophecy – AD 70 (Mostly)		
Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.	1 And as he went out of the temple, One of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.	5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts
2 And Jesus said unto them See ye not all these things Verily I say unto you, There shall not be one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.	2 And Jesus answering said unto him Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.	He said 6 As for these things which ye behold The days will come in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down
3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives The disciples came unto him privately,saying Tell us when shall these things be? (1.) And what shall be the sign of thy coming? (2.) And of the end of the world? (3.)	3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us when shall these things be And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled	7 And they asked him, saying Master but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

And of the end of the world? (3.)		
4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you	5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you	8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived:
5 For many shall come in my name,saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many (2Thess.2:3)	6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.	For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.
6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass but the end is not yet.	7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars Be ye not troubled For such things must needs be But the end shall not be yet.	9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions Be not terrified For these things must first come to pass But the end is not by and by
7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom	8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom	10 Then he said unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom
And there shall be famines		
And pestilences		
And earthquakes in divers places	And there shall be earthquakes in divers places	11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places
	And there shall be famines and troubles	And famines and pestilences
		And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.
8 All these are the beginning of sorrows	These are the beginning of sorrows	

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted	9 But take heed to yourselves	12 But before all these
	For they shall deliver you up to councils	They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you
	And in the synagogues ye shall be beaten	delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons
	and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake	being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake
	for a testimony against them	13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.
	10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations	
	11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up,	
	take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate	14 Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer
	but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye	15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom
		Which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist
	for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit	
	12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son and children shall rise up against their parents	16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks and friends

and shall kill you	and shall cause them to be put to death	and some of you shall they cause to be put to death
and ye shall be hated of all nations for my names sake.	13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my names sake	17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake
10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another		
11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many .		
12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.		
13 But he that shall endure unto the end , the same shall be saved.	but he that shall endure to the end shall be saved	
		18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish
		19 In your patience possess ye your souls
14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations,		
and then shall the end come.		

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
15 When ye shall therefore see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand).	14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand)	
16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains	then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains.	20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.
		21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto
		22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.
17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house	15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein , to take anything out of his house.	
18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.	16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment	
19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!	23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.	18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.	
21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be	19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.	for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people
22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened	20 And except the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved, but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days	
23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo here is Christ, or there; believe it not.	21 And then if any man shall say to you Lo, here is Christ, or, lo, he is there believe him not.	
24 For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall shew great signs and wonders Insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.	22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall shew signs and wonders to deceive, if it were possible,	

Matt. 24:1-28	Mk.13:1-23	Luke 21:5-24
	even the elect	
25 Behold I have told you before	23 But take ye heed Behold, I have foretold you all things	
26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth Behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.		
27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, And shineth even unto the west, So shall also the coming of the Son of man be.		
28 For whithersoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together		
Transition from AD 70 to the Latter Days		24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled

The Olivet Prophecy – The Latter Days (Mostly)	Mark 13:24-32	Luke 21:25-33
Matt.24:29-36	Mark 13:24-32	Luke 21:25-33
29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven	24 But in those days, after that tribulation the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall	Post AD 70 25 And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth
Transition from AD 70 to the latter days		
and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken	and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken	for the powers of heaven shall be shaken
30 And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven; and then shall all the		

Matt.24:29-36	Mark 13:24-32	Luke 21:25-33
tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory	26 And then shall they see the son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.	27 And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.
31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other	27 And then shall he send his angels and shall gather together his elect from the four winds from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.	28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.
32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is nigh	28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves ye know that summer is near	29 And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig tree and all the trees when they now shoot forth Ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand

33 So likewise ye when ye shall see all these things know that it is near, even at the doors 34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. 36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven but my Father only	29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass know that it is nigh, even at the doors 30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven neither the son but the Father	31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand 32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled 33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.
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- Luke 21:29 – “all the trees” – Trees are a symbol for nations in Scripture – Ezek. 31.
- When Israel became a nation in 1948 there were 57 nations in the United Nations. There are now 193 nations.
- A ‘generation’ is a lifetime, not 40 years as some have suggested (see Matt. 1).
- Luke 2:25-26,36-38 – The pattern was set for the fulfillment of Luke 21:32. Simeon and Anna were of advanced age as will be those who saw the fig tree of Israel produce leaves in 1948, but no fruit as yet.

February 18

Exodus 29 – Instructions for the consecration of Aaron and his sons

V.1 – “And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest’s office” – The appointment of the high priest was a fourfold process (Ex. 28:41). He was called (Ex. 28:1), cleansed (chap. 29:4), clothed (V.5-6), and consecrated (V.9). He represented Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh. But additionally in this chapter, Moses acted as priest, thus combining in his person the positions of lawgiver, ruler, prophet and priest (V.3,11,14,16-18, etc.).

Moses was in the mount to receive the pattern of the Tabernacle and all its functions, including the priesthood. Their consecration is recorded in Lev. 8 where all that follows in this chapter was implemented. We will leave consideration of it until then.

In V.24,26, and 27 there are three references to the **wave offering**. The word “wave” in Hebrew is *nuph* – a primitive root with a variety of meanings, but in this context signifies to move to and fro, wave to and fro. The wave offering (as the term implies) was waved before Yahweh by the priest in consecration of portions of the peace offering (see Lev. 7:29-30 below). Though Yahweh did not need to be awakened (like Baal – 1 Kings 18:27), the effect on the offeror was that Yahweh would take notice of his real desire for fellowship with Him through consecration of his life to Him.

Lev. 7:29-30 – “Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his **peace offerings** unto Yahweh shall bring his oblation unto Yahweh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of Yahweh made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be **waved for a wave offering before Yahweh.**”

There are also four references to the **heave offering** in Ex. 29:27-28. The Hebrew word for “heave” is *terumah* – a present (as offered up). As the word implies, the portion of the offering was heaved upwards towards heaven in the act of **surrender**. This is illustrated in Lamentations where Jeremiah draws on the real purpose of the heave offering (Lam. 3:40-41 – “Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Yahweh. **Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens**”). The surrender of the “heart” (the deeper part of the mind where character is formed) is fundamental in service to Yahweh (Deut. 6:4-9). The scribe of Mark 12 was close to the mark when he said in Mark 12:33 – “And to love him with **all the heart**, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

V.45 – The aim of all these ordinances was that Yahweh might be worshipped in the beauty of holiness and dwell among His people – “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.”

Psalm 85 – Mercy and truth are met together

V.1 – “**To the chief Musician, A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** Yahweh, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription of Ps. 84. It has been suggested that the language of V.1 dates the psalm to the return of 50,000 from Babylonian captivity in BC 536. This may be so, but as in many previous psalms, background is not the critical thing when a psalm is looking far off into the future. That is evidently the situation here.

V.2 – “Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin” – The reason why Judah went into captivity between BC 606 and 536 was to eradicate and purge

Babylonian idolatry from them. It is a historical fact that the returned exiles were free from the worship of gods of wood and stone. In that sense, the sins and iniquities that took them to Babylon had been forgiven.

V.3-9 – “Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease” – While Yahweh had cleansed His people of idolatry, they were still far from manifesting His righteousness in their everyday behaviour. This was evidenced by the problems encountered by Joshua and Zerubbabel, and Ezra and Nehemiah. There needed to be a ‘turning’ (the repeated appeal in Ps. 80), and a revival – “Wilt thou not **revive** us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” God desired to “speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.”

V.10 – “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” – What does this mean? Importantly, the two principal words that Yahweh uses of His own character are employed here (see Ex. 34:6-7). “Mercy” is *chesed* – loving-kindness; and “truth” is *emeth* – stability; figuratively certainty, truth, trustworthiness, faithfulness. In God, these are perfectly balanced – mercy is shown when the righteousness of God is upheld. It is not so with man naturally – men are biased towards sin and routinely defy the righteousness of God, and all too often fail to show mercy. There can be no peace unless there is righteousness (Isa. 48:22; Ps. 72:1-4; James 3:17-18). When the Divine character is manifested either by Yahweh, or by His people, then “righteousness and peace have kissed (*nashaq* – to put together, kiss) each other.” Our Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect example of this, and he is coming back to the earth to install mercy and truth in it.

V.11-13 – “Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven” – This will be the outcome when “a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgement” (Isa. 32:1), for then “the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever” (Isa. 32:17). Under Christ’s rule – “Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.”

Psalm 86 – Teach me thy way, O Yahweh

V.1 – **A Prayer of David.** Bow down thine ear, O Yahweh, hear me: for I am poor and needy” – It is difficult to determine an exact time in David’s life when a prayer of this nature needed to be offered, for there were many times in his life when he had need to pray like this. In the first eight verses, the focus is on the mercies of God and His willingness to forgive the genuine who call upon Him. In V.9-17, there is an appeal to be delivered from the machinations of his enemies.

V.2-8 – “For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee” (V.5) – David had learnt by the bitter experiences of life that there was only one place to go for relief of an evil conscience and to experience the blessedness of forgiveness. There was no help either in man or in their false gods – “Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.”

V.9-17 – “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name” – This was the ultimate outcome that David earnestly sought, but as he stated in his last words it seemed to be a long way off – “for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow” (2 Sam. 23:5). In the meantime, his enemies plotted against him – “O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul” (V.14). The only way to endure was to throw himself on the mercy of God – “But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.”

As in many of David's psalms there is a distinct Messianic flavour, so it is here – “give thy strength unto thy **servant** (Isa. 42:1), and save the son of thine **handmaid**” (Mary – Luke 1:38). Christ too, asked to be shown “a token for good” and it came in the form of a resurrection from the dead – “For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell” (*sheol* = the grave).

Mark 14

V.1-11 – The chief priests and scribes were looking for an opportunity to arrest Jesus, and couldn't believe their luck when Judas Iscariot turned up to betray him. This arose out of Judas being rebuked by the Lord after Mary had anointed him with expensive ointment and he criticized her for it. There is an important exhortation here when the Lord said of Mary, “She hath done what she could.” If everyone did what they could in ecclesial life there would be much to commend and to share.

V.12-25 – The disciples asked, “Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?” Sending two of his disciples he gave them a sign – “there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water.” Men did not normally carry water, for it was a woman's task. The disciples “found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve,” and immediately issued the challenge, “Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.” Judas was revealed as the betrayer, but the disciples did not perceive it. The memorial feast was instituted with the promise that it would culminate in the Lord sharing it with his faithful disciples in the Kingdom.

V.26-31 – A further challenge came on the way to the garden of Gethsemane – “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,” citing Zech. 13:7. Peter exceeded his companions with assertions of his undying loyalty. This unwise boast was to become a major crossroad in his life.

V.32-42 – Taking the inner circle of the disciples, Peter, James and John into a quiet place in the garden, the Lord made three plaintive prayers to his Father, who succoured him by sending an angel (Luke 22:43) because each time Jesus returned to his three disciples they were asleep. His words to them – “The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak,” also applied to him. In each prayer he said firmly in conclusion, “nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt,” for his spirit was willing to obey his Father “to the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8), but like his disciples he was saddled with a nature that was “weak” and naturally recoiled from the horror of crucifixion that awaited him. There was no other way, and he knew it, but that didn't prevent his nature working the same way as ours would have under the same circumstances. The difference was that he would remain firm and loyal to his Father right to the end, whereas Peter and the other disciples would run away to save themselves, and even deny they knew him. No wonder he was determined to destroy this weak nature on the tree.

V.43-52 – The arresting party from the high priest arrived led by Judas who gave them a sign – “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.” A more heinous betrayal is hard to imagine (Luke 22:48). Peter hacked off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant but was commanded to put away his weapon. As the Lord upbraided the surreptitiousness of the betrayal, his disciples “all forsook him, and fled.” Another who “fled from them naked” appears to be John Mark, the writer of the Gospel.

V.53-65 – The trial recorded here before Caiaphas was the second of **six** the Lord was to endure. He was first brought before Annas (the effective high priest and father-in-law to Caiaphas – John 18:13.34), and then taken to Caiaphas. Peter followed at a safe distance and snuck into the high priest's house “and warmed himself at the fire.” He saw “many false witnesses” come to this farcical trial who could not agree, until two schooled ‘witnesses’ twisted

John 2:19 – “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands,” when Jesus actually spoke of his body, but these could not agree either. The high priest theatrically stood up and berated Jesus who remained silent (Isa. 53:7), until an oath of adjuration compelled him to respond – “I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Ps. 110:1). Accused of blasphemy, Jesus was condemned to death and brutally treated and scorned blasphemously after being blindfolded

V.66-72 – Peter learnt how true the statement was that “the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Whereas the three plaintive prayers of Jesus in the garden saw an increasing resolution each time, it was the reverse for Peter. The first charge that he was a disciple of Jesus produced a relatively mild “I don’t know what you are talking about” response. The second “he denied with an **oath**, I do not know the man,” and the third time, “But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.” The rooster immediately signalled his failure to keep his commitment and he departed weeping bitterly. Etched on his brain was the image of his Master looking sadly at him as he denied him the third time. Sometimes necessary development in eternal things can be very painful and embarrassing.

Three times in this chapter the Lord calls himself “the Son of man” (V.21,41,62). This is consistent with the fact that there are 84 occurrences of this title in the four Gospel records (fully 80 are used by the Lord of himself). By contrast the title “the son of God” occurs 25 times in the four Gospel records and the Lord only uses it four times of himself. There must be a reason for this.

We have no difficulty understanding the title “the son of God,” but the title “the Son of man” is more challenging. Is this title emphasizing Christ’s human connection with those he came to save, or, is there another purpose? The latter is the case. This title is drawn from Ps. 8:4, Ps. 80:17 and Ps. 144:3 where Christ is clearly referred to.

There are 108 occurrences of the phrase “son of man” in the O.T. – 92 of those of Ezekiel the prophet as a type of Christ (because he is only a type, the definite article is absent). In the psalms referred to above “the son of man” occurs because it refers to Jesus Christ.

The context of Psalms 8 and 80 are about Yahweh “visiting” (*paqad* – to attend to, muster, number, reckon, visit, punish, appoint, look after, care for) His son to ensure that sin and death were overcome to enable the salvation of the race (see Ps. 80:17). It is a title that emphasizes Christ’s delegated authority from his Father to exercise dominion over all carnal things. David wrote Ps. 8 after killing Goliath which he saw as a type of the death of Christ to destroy the *diabolos* (see Heb. 2:6-15 where Ps. 8 is cited).

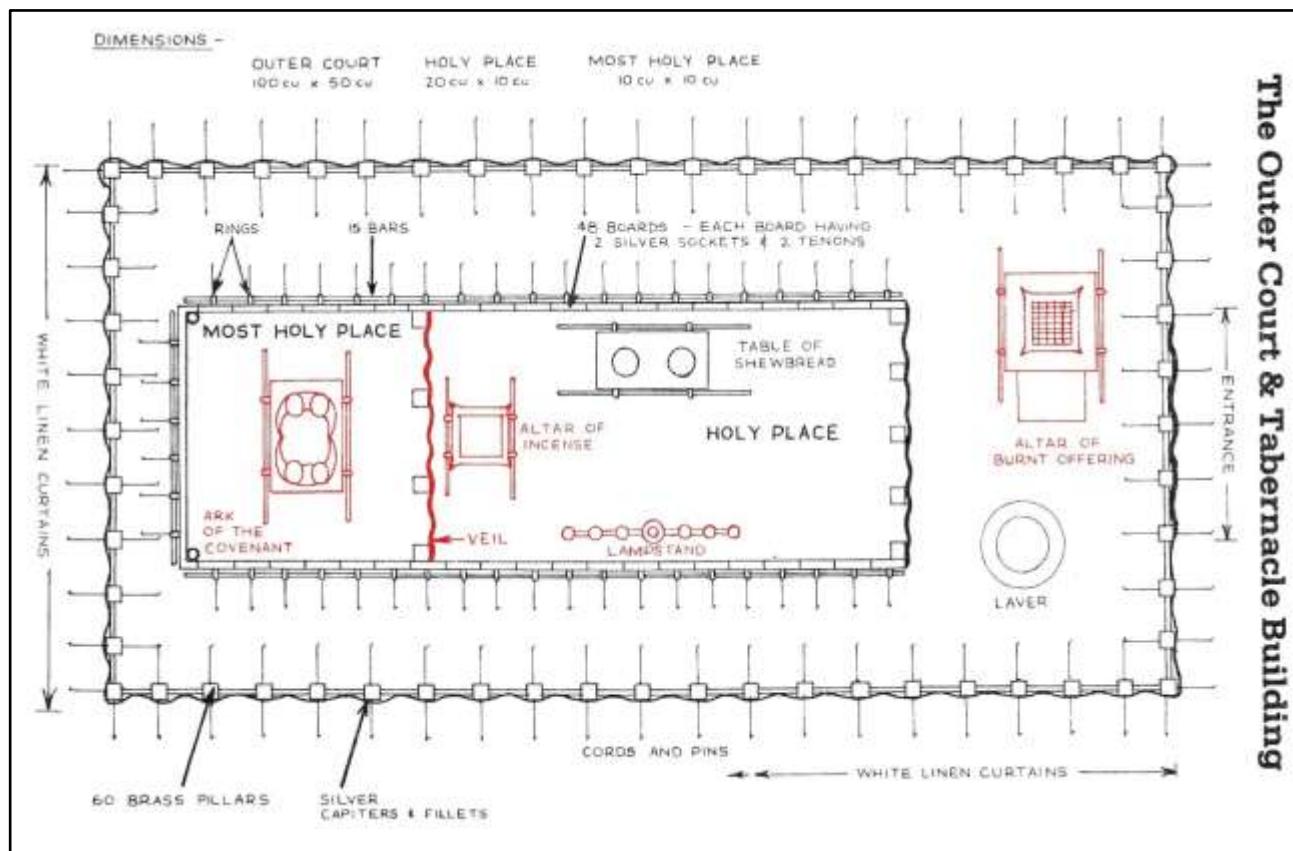
While reading the four Gospel accounts it is worthwhile focusing on the context where the title “the Son of man” occurs and ask the question – ‘Is this context about the Lord’s sharing of our nature, or about him exercising dominion over carnal things?’ You are unlikely to find one where the emphasis is on Christ’s humanity. They are almost exclusively about his delegated authority from his Father to exercise dominion.

February 19

Exodus 30 – The principles and power of prayer

This chapter continues the instructions of Yahweh to Moses regarding the construction of the Tabernacle and its accessories. It treats with the altar of incense, the redemption of ‘souls’, the laver, the holy anointing oil, and the composition of the incense.

The altar of incense was set close to the veil of the Tabernacle (representing Christ's mortal flesh – Heb. 10:20).



In verses 1 to 10 the design and use of the altar of incense is given to Moses. Incense was to be burnt upon it morning and evening. Incense is the Biblical symbol for prayer – “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as **incense**; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Ps. 141:2) – “And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much **incense**, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne” (Rev. 8:3).

The altar of incense had a “crown of gold” (Ex. 30:3). The word “crown” is *zér* – border, moulding, circlet. This became the model for the houses of the Israelites when they entered the Land. They were to have a rooftop for prayer and meditation – Deut. 22:8 (Rotherham) – “When thou buildest a new house, then shalt thou make a parapet (KJV “battlement” – *ma'ăqeh* – parapet; a low wall at the edge of a balcony, roof) to thy roof, so shalt thou not treasure up blood-guiltiness against thy house, for he that is in danger of falling might fall therefrom” (as happened 2 Kings 1:2). The Lord refers to this in Luke 17:31 by which he infers that he expects to find some of his servants at his second coming who will be praying and meditating. Incense will be coming from the “housetop” as it once did from the altar of incense.

The Divinely appointed ingredients of incense

V.34-36 – “And Yahweh said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, **stacte**, and **onycha**, and **galbanum**; these sweet spices with pure **frankincense**: of each shall there be a like weight: And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.”

“stacte” – *nataph* – a liquid drop, suggestive of a tear. Stacte is a kind of myrrh. It is obtained by inserting a deep gash in the branches of the tree, and collecting the liquid. This suggests the principle of sacrifice. No prayer will be acceptable to Yahweh unless the one offering it is prepared to subordinate his will to that of the Father. “Not my will but Thine be done,” is the attitude required (see Luke 22:44). And that means sacrifice of self-interest if necessary. The Jews and others suppose it to be what was afterwards called the balm of Gilead.

“onycha” – *shechaileth* – Denotes the *onycha* (nail-fish, from its form). It was made from a white sea-shell found on the shores of the Red Sea and therefore reminded Israel of their deliverance from Egypt. When Onycha was burnt, it gave forth a pleasant odour – indicative of the sense of gratitude felt when deliverance from bondage is remembered.

“galbanum” – *chelbenah* (probably from *chalay*, milk or gum, and *lavan*, white), is the gummy, resinous juice of an umbelliferous (with flower heads shaped like an opened umbrella) plant. When any part of the plant is broken, there issues out a little thin juice, of a cream colour, of a fat, tough substance, like gum, composed of many small, shining grains, of a strong, piercing smell and a sharp, warm taste. It is acrid smelling when burnt. It is said that its main use was to keep serpents away – a significant element in regard to prayer. The fat of sacrificial offerings was always burnt (Lev. 3:16-17), symbolizing the worshipper’s energy and love consumed in Divine service.

“frankincense” – *lebônâh* – A white resin burned as fragrant incense. This is obtained from a spice tree which yields a white gum at the slightest scratch. It signified “whiteness,” the symbol of purity. Prayer should be such: pure, without false motives, or ostentation. Its instant emergence when the tree is scratched speaks of the constant use of prayer on all occasions, particularly when under pressure.

“each shall there be a like weight” – Every aspect of prayer symbolized by the individual elements of the compounded incense was to be in equal measure. Prayers, individual or delivered on behalf of the community need to be balanced with submission to the Divine will (i.e. absence of self-interest); the humility of gratitude and appreciation; the spirit that desires to be delivered from evil so that energy may be put into Divine service; and that also hungers for righteousness through building a close relationship with God by constant prayer.

Here are some useful quotations from Bro. H.P. Mansfield:

“When we open the Word of God, God speaks to us; when we engage in Prayer, we speak to Him. The person who studies all the time, but never prays is like those dull companions who are always ready to listen, but never contribute anything to the conversation. There is nothing stimulating in such company. On the other hand, the person who is always praying, but never studying, is like those garrulous people who dominate all conversation, and are never ready to listen to what others might like to say. Such conversationalists soon bore us! The ideal companion is one who is prepared both to listen and to talk, to interchange thoughts and conversation. His presence gives us pleasure, and we delight to converse with Him.” – H.P. Mansfield – “Making Prayer Powerful” (pg. 7).

“During the Mosaic economy, the priests in the Temple, each morning and evening, burned incense on the Golden Altar just outside the veil that hid the Most Holy from view. For this purpose, coals were taken from the altar of burnt offering in the court of the Temple. Thus contact was made with two altars: the Brazen Altar for burnt offering, and the Golden Altar for incense. In this act of worship, incense symbolized prayer. It taught that prayer, to be really effective, must be ignited with a sacrifice that pointed forward to the Lamb of God that Yahweh declared He would provide for the needs of humanity. The metals of the two altars were significant. Brass is the metal of flesh; gold is the metal of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7). The basis of acceptable worship is

sacrifice and faith. Sacrifice is necessary because of the nature of flesh; whereas prayer is an act of faith which brings the worshipper into the very presence of Yahweh." (IBID pg. 9)

V.11-16 – Under the Law, when a census was taken, each Israelite had to pay "the half shekel of the sanctuary" to signify his acknowledgement that he needed redemption (V.13,15). To drive this home "the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel" as all were equal when it came to redemption, hence, the half shekel was of silver (the Biblical symbol for redemption). See comments on Matt. 17:24-27 on January 15 in which Christ included himself in this matter.

V.17-21 – "Thou shalt also make a **laver** of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal" – Little is revealed about the size and shape of the laver, and this is appropriate for it had only one purpose in the spiritual realm – to represent the cleansing power of the Word of God (Eph. 5:26 – "That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the ecclesia) with the washing of water by the word."

V.22-33 – Four "principal spices" were to be combined with pure olive oil to compound a precious and exclusive anointing oil with which to sanctify the Tabernacle, all its furniture and accoutrements as well as its priests – Aaron and his sons. It was not to be applied to human flesh or duplicated on the pain of excommunication, for it was "holy, and it shall be holy unto you." Its antitype is the Word of God, described also as the Truth (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:7). An understanding of the Word brings with it responsibility to obey, and therefore is the medium of sanctification (John 17:17).

The principles of the anointing oil

Consider the **five** (grace) ingredients in regard to their application upon believers – Free-flowing **myrrh** – Bitter; fragrant: the different experiences of life occasioned by the knowledge of the Truth. Sweet **Cinnamon** – The inner life of uprightness: the mental development of the Divine wisdom. Sweet **Calamus** – To be erect, upstanding: such qualities stem from understanding, and develop a spiritual attitude in life. Hence, "Quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). "Endure hardness" (2 Tim. 2:3). As calamus produces its best fragrance through bruising, so the disciple develops through the trials of life (Heb. 2:11). **Cassia** – to shrivel; bend over: manifested in a responsive attitude. Thus, to bow the head in reverential worship, an aspect of maturity and respect to the holy things of Yahweh. **Olive oil** – God manifestation and faith, suggested by the purple ripeness of the olive berry, and the golden colour of the pure oil. When all spices are combined in the life of the believer, as the golden oil of faith (Zech. 4:12), a fulness of quality will be seen in the principles of God manifested in heart, mind and life.

Psalm 87 – This man was born in Zion

V.1 – (ESV) "**A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. A Song.** On the holy mount stands the city he founded" – A son of Korah reflected on the importance of Zion to Yahweh his God. When Israel came out of Egypt, God promised He would choose a place in the land of Canaan where He would put His name. Warning against the multifarious worship of the nations who inhabited the land and who "served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree" (Deut. 12:2), He said – "But unto the place which Yahweh your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come" to offer sacrifices. Yahweh had chosen Zion, but for 500 years it was in the possession of the Jebusites through the folly of Judah and the slackness of Benjamin (see comments on Judges 1 on June 6). David knew that Zion was God's chosen place for sacrifice and worship from his understanding of Gen. 14 and 22. He determined in his youth to bring the Ark to Zion and house it in a tent of his own erecting (Ps. 132; 1 Chron. 15:1; 16:1). Zion played a vital role in the past and it has an even more

important part to play in the future – “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God” (V.3).

V.2 – “Yahweh loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob” – As Baalam looked down from the heights of Peor he was overcome with the sight of Israel’s encampment – “How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!” (Num 24:5), but as impressive as that may have been, it did not match “the gates of Zion” in God’s eyes. The reason for this was its future. The gate was the place of rulership (“thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” – Gen. 22:17). Christ will rule the earth from Zion – “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Ps. 2:6); “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.” Its future is bright.

V.4-6 – “I will make mention of Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there” – Zion is our “mother” (Gal. 4:26 – “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all”), and she has had many children born to her in her ‘sleep’ (see the context of Isa. 49:14-26 for ‘Zion’ shall say, “Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?”). The Gospel went to the Gentiles when Zion lapsed into ‘sleep’ in AD 70. The result was myriads of Gentiles converted to the promises made to Abraham and David which are centred in Zion.

Gentile converts baptized into Christ are children of Zion (Isa. 49:6,20-23; 54:1-5). These are the subject of V.4. They are counted as being “born” in Zion. In V.6 this is emphasized when at the Judgement Seat Christ will find the names of many faithful Gentiles in the Book of Life – “Yahweh shall count, when he **writeth up the people**, that this man was born there.” How precious then is our hope as we live as “strangers and pilgrims” in foreign lands. Who would not want to be in Zion when “the singers as the players on instruments” (like sons of Korah) will praise Yahweh in immortality, for all His fountains (the wells of life – Isa. 12:3 – “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation”). “All my fountains are in Thee!” (Young’s Lit. for V.7). Our hymn 379 says it all.

The subscription to Psalm 87 which is found in the superscription of Ps. 88 is “A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth” – In the Hebrew “Leannoth” means ‘shoutings’ and being associated with “Mahalath” indicates an intensity of rejoicing, expressed in ‘dancings and shoutings’. When the ark was brought to Jerusalem by David there was such an intensity of joy (2 Sam. 6:5,14,15). In Psalm 87, we have the extension of this rejoicing, when those whose hearts and lives have been centred in Zion, will finally be brought to the ‘city of God’.

Psalm 88 – Crying day and night unto God

V.1 – “A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, **Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite**. O Yahweh God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee” – The highlighted phrase is the subscription to Ps. 87 (see comment there). This psalm is a Maschil (for instruction) of Heman the Ezrahite and is from start to finish a song of utter misery. An Ezrahite was connected with the tribe of Judah, Ezrah being another form of Zerah (1 Chron. 2:6). The following psalm was written by Ethan the Ezrahite (who is named with Ethan as a wise man in the days of Solomon – 1 Kings 4:31) and his psalm is a wonderful portrayal of the mission of Christ. They could not be more diverse psalms, but these two men appear to be companions in 1 Chron. 15:19 when David brought the Ark to Zion (and that makes them sons of Korah and Kohathites – “So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and

Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass.” That was a time of rejoicing par excellence. There may have been a time later in Heman’s life where a disaster had overtaken him – “my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave” (V.3). He did have many children – “God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters” and tragedy may have overtaken some of them as it had his forefather Korah and all those who stood with him against Moses and Aaron (Num. 16:1-3). Much of the mournful sentiments of this psalm can easily find a place in that awful tragedy that overtook Korah and his company from which his sons were saved (Num. 26:11). Consider the following: V.4 – “I am counted with them that go down into the pit”; V.5 – “Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave,” and “they are cut off from thy hand”; V.6 – “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps”; V.7 – “Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves” (like an earthquake when the earth opened up to swallow Korah’s family); V.8 – “Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me”; V.10 – “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?” (cp. Jude 6); V.16 – “Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off”; V.18 – “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness,” (doubtless some lovers and friends were lost that day by Korah’s sons).

Perhaps the sentence, “Afflicted have I been, and dying, from youth, I have borne the terror of thee—I shall be distracted!” (Rotherham for V.15) provides a clue. With such a dreadful heritage of the “captain” appointed by the wilderness generation to lead them back to Egypt (Num. 14:4), namely, Korah his ancestor, consumed by fire after watching his family and supporters being swallowed up alive by the writhing earth, had haunted Heman all his life. We will find out one day what made this wise and dedicated servant of God so miserable day after day (V.1).

Mark 15

V.1-5 – Christ endured six trials between his arrest in the garden and his crucifixion. Brought to Pilate the Roman governor, he was asked what province he came from and was sent to Herod who disdained and brutalized him (Luke 23:7-11) and sent him back to Pilate. This was the final trial that led to his condemnation. Apart from confirming that Pilate had rightly said that he was king of the Jews – “Thou sayest,” “as a sheep before her shearers is dumb” he opened not his mouth so that “Pilate marvelled.”

V.6-20 – Pilate, caught between conscience, an apoplectic wife and charges of treason against Caesar condemned Jesus of Nazareth and released an insurrectionist and murderer. The Lord was mocked and brutally treated before being crucified.

V.21 – “And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, **the father of Alexander and Rufus**, to bear his cross.” An unusual feature of this passage is the seemingly gratuitous reference to Simon being the father of Alexander and Rufus. This is clearly inserted to point to something in the future. Cyrene was an ancient Greek colony and Roman city in northeastern Libya in North Africa. There were many visitors to Judea from that region (Acts 2:10) – “Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the **parts of Libya about Cyrene**, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes.” Simon was apparently from that region. Being a Roman city it is possible that he had a connection with Rome. There is a “Rufus” mentioned in Rom. 16:13 as a member of the Roman ecclesia. If in fact this Rufus is the one mentioned in Mark 15:21 (as many believe), then his father’s taking up of the cross and following Jesus (Matt. 16:24) may have been a crucial moment in his life.

V.38 – “And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” – As noted in the comments on Ex. 30, the veil was a type of the flesh of Christ (Heb. 10:20). Being rent from **top to bottom** indicates that this was a work of God, as Peter informed the Jews on

the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:22-24 – “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: **him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

See comments on Matt. 27:27-66 on **July 26** as the records are very similar.

Mark 16

V.1-13 – “when the sabbath was past” – The word “past” is *diaginomai* – to elapse meanwhile. Jewish days ended and began at 6 pm (and in Israel still do). Christ rose from the dead and was immortalized at 6 pm on the Sabbath (see comments on John 20, **April 24** pg. 51) exactly three days and three nights (required by prophecy – Matt. 12:40) after being entombed at 6 pm on Wednesday 14th Abib (see comments on Ex. 16:1 on **February 8**). What we are reading of here is a reference to nearly 12 hours later as the sun began to rise on the first day of the week (we call Sunday). The two Mary’s who had sat and watched Jesus being interred on Wednesday evening were on their way back again early in the morning and were astonished by an earthquake which accompanied the arrival of an angel (Matt. 28:2-4) whose task it was to roll away the stone and sit upon it as a testimony to all, that the Messiah had been raised from the dead (remember – Christ did not need to have open doors to enter and leave any place as an immortal – John 20:19). That angel they found sitting on the right hand side of the now empty tomb. Instructed to go and tell the disciples “they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.” It seems Mary Magdalene lingered, for she was next to encounter the risen Lord and he sent her to his disciples, as he did to the two on the way to Emmaus later that day.

V.14-20 – The disciples were slow to believe that Christ had been raised from the dead despite the reports received, and so he appeared to them “and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” This fact gives real force to Peter’s words in 1 Pet. 1:8 – “Whom having **not seen**, ye love; in whom, though now **ye see him not**, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” That is our challenge. He proceeded to give them a commission – (RV) “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” Signs (miracles) would attend their preaching to confirm the word.

February 20

Exodus 31

V.1-11 – “See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri (“fiery”), the son of Hur (“white linen”), of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship” – Bezaleel (“in the shadow, i.e. protection of God”) and Aholiab (“Father’s tent”) were selected to supervise the construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture. They are specifically endowed for their work, and given various tasks to perform. When Yahweh desires a work to be done, He will provide workmen capable of carrying it out.

V.12-18 – “Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to Yahweh: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death” – The 4th commandment (Ex. 20:8-11) is amplified in this section. It contains one of the

simplest and most incontrovertible repudiations of the notion of Theistic Evolutionist in Scripture. If they insist that the days of Gen. 1 were vastly longer periods than 24 hours, what do they say about God resting for such periods? Did He need that much refreshing?

The final thing that God did for Moses during his 40 days and nights on the mount was to inscribe with the finger of Elohim in two tables of stone the 10 commandments. What was written therein proved to be “a ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3:7) when Moses returned to his people, as Christ soon will to his.

Exodus 32 – A type of the return of Christ to the earth

Moses made seven ascents of Mt Sinai. The one that began in Ex. 24:18 was the fifth. As a type of Christ going into heaven, he entered into the cloud of glory (Ex. 24:15-17; Dan. 7:13; Acts 1:9) and disappeared out of the sight of Israel. He went to the top of Mt Sinai to receive the pattern of the Tabernacle and all its furniture and functions, just as Christ went to his Father to receive the pattern of the future glorified Ecclesia and to begin its development. That was a mission of grace. Accordingly, this was the 5th ascent of Moses (5 = grace – John 5:2; etc.).

Just as Moses returned to find many in the ‘ecclesia’ of that time (Acts 7:38) in a state of apostasy, so the type strongly suggests Christ may find the same when he returns. The second of the 10 commandments had been broken by substituting a golden calf to represent Yahweh (Ex. 32:5). Significantly, the calf was made from the golden earrings of the people. Gold is the symbol for tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7), and the ear is employed for hearing. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Many in Israel had traded their hearing ear for the gods of Egypt which they had supposedly left behind. They had “itching ears” as it were (2 Tim. 4:3) – “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.”

Poverty of leadership had “made them naked” (Ex. 32:25), the very concern that Christ expressed in Rev. 16:15 about the effects of the three unclean spirits (ideologies) of our time, namely, Humanism (Liberty, Equality and Fraternity) may have on the Brotherhood of the latter days. He feared “spiritual nakedness” would threaten his people at the end of the Gentile Age. It leads only to condemnation and the second death.

Similarly, it is most likely that the 3,000 who were slain by the Levites who came to Moses’ side (Ex. 32:26) were identified by the fact that they were literally naked. The word “play” in Ex. 32:6 is *tsâchaq* – a primitive root; to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by implication to sport. It occurs 13 times in the O.T. and is translated “sporting” in Gen. 26:8 of Isaac observed conducting himself in a manner with Rebekah that indicated to Abimelech that they were husband and wife. Hence, depending on context, it can have a sexual connotation. It is clear that the immoral practices of Egypt had entered the ‘playing’ as it so often does in the modern world.

It is perhaps significant that the tragic events of Ex. 32 which speak eloquently of the Second Advent of Christ are preceded by Ex. 31:17 – “It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in **six days** Yahweh made heaven and earth, and on **the seventh day he rested**, and was refreshed.” We are at the end of 6,000 years of human history and yet voices are sometimes heard in our community equivalent to those of many in Israel of old – “as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” (V.1). Peter warned that this would happen – “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?” (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

The building of a ‘tabernacle’ in which Yahweh might ‘dwell’ (Ex. 25:8) has taken 6,000 years (6 ‘days’ – 2 Pet. 2:8). The seventh day (Millennium) is at hand when Yahweh will rest when His glory is revealed in the Bride of Christ – His temple/tabernacle (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16).

On his 6th ascent to plead for forgiveness for the idolatrous nation, Moses proposed something that comes from man (6 being the number of man) that Yahweh rejected outright. He offered himself as a substitute (Ex. 32:31-33) saying – “Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” In his book Theophany on page 20, Bro. C.C. Walker (second editor of the Christadelphian Magazine) described Moses’ proposal as the equivalent of the apostate churches’ doctrine of Substitution. It is repugnant to God and antithetical to every principle by which He operates. Moses’ proposal was repudiated and the apostate nation was disfellowship by God (Ex. 33).

Psalm 89 – I will make him my firstborn

V.1-4 – **Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.** I will sing of the mercies of Yahweh for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations” – Ethan was a compatriot of Heman (see comments on Ps. 88). In this magnificent psalm he sets forth the antithesis of the mournful and despondent psalm of Heman. It is a glorious Messianic psalm based on God’s covenant to David – “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.”

V.5-18 celebrate the greatness of Yahweh and pose the question, “who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto Yahweh?” The answer to that question is simple – “I and my father are one” (John 10:30) said Christ. He is the one to whom V.19 looked – “thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” Of him, David was a wonderful type.

The “David” of V.20 points to Christ. It is significant that the word “anointed” in this verse is *mâshach* – to rub with oil; to anoint, is the root of *mâshîyach* i.e. Messiah – the word used in Ps. 2:2 of Christ – the anointed one. He is the one exalted of verses 24 to 27. In V.27 we read – “Also I will make him my firstborn, **higher** than the kings of the earth.” The word “higher” is *elyon* usually translated “Most High” – this is a title of Yahweh first used four times in Gen. 14:18-22. Invariably, when this title is used the subject of the context is drawn from Gen. 14. It is the title that Gabriel used of the son of God to be born of Mary (Luke 1:31-33). In Luke 1:32, Gabriel said, “he shall be called the son of the highest.” The Greek word there is *hupsistos* – highest (the N.T. equivalent of *elyon*). V.27 would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ the ‘beloved’ (meaning of the name David). The above explanation is necessary to deal correctly with V.28-36 which clearly allude to 2 Sam. 7:11-16 where Yahweh made His promise to David concerning His, and David’s son. Some have applied verse V.27 to Solomon, David’s son and successor because verses 28-36 go on to speak of the failure of “his children.” They argue that these verses refer to the nation of Israel in its history of waywardness and apostasy. Indeed they do. However, Christ called the nation to which he came as his “children” (Matt. 8:12; 15:26; 23:37; John 1:11; Acts 13:26,33; etc). It should be noted that Christ’s “seed” (Ps. 89:29; i.e. faithful saints), are made to “endure for ever” (*la-ad* = “for eternity”), and his throne “as the days of the heavens” (Lit.) = perpetuity in government. This is repeated in a slightly different way in verses 36-37 where it is said, “His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.” However, “for ever” here, as in V.37, is *olam* = the Millennium. In V.37, the “moon” (symbol for the ecclesia) exists in the Millennium and is perfected at the end of it (Rev. 21:1-9).

V.38-52 – In spirit, Ethan representing the chosen nation (the subject of God’s promise to David) laments the long period of tribulation that would come on his people because of apostasy and

the rejection of their Messiah – “wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed” (*mâshîyach* – Messiah).

1 Corinthians 1

There must be a reason why the Apostle Paul includes Sosthenes in his introduction to the ecclesia at Corinth that was experiencing many problems revealed in this letter. Paul had spent a couple of years in Corinth (Acts 18). He preached that Jesus was the Christ in the synagogue until the resistance and opposition became so strong that he adjourned to the house of Justus next door to the synagogue. With the conversion of the ruler of the synagogue, Crispus and his family (Acts 18:8), Sosthenes became ruler and prosecuted the case against Paul before Gallio (Acts 18:12-16). Sosthenes was severely beaten by the Greeks for his leadership of this “insurrection” and subsequently was converted and joined the Corinthian Ecclesia. It seems he was with Paul at Philippi when the epistle was written. His conversion was a positive influence as Paul dealt with problems between Jews and Gentiles in the fledgling ecclesia in Corinth.

V.10-31 – There were serious divisions in the ecclesia, as well as a raft of other doctrinal and moral issues to address. In Christ it is desirable “that ye all **speak the same thing**, and that there be **no divisions** among you; but that ye be **perfectly joined together in the same mind** and in the same judgement.” This is not possible where there are ‘parties’ and cliques who throw their weight behind men and not Christ. Respect of persons is dangerous and detrimental to harmony as was proven by their experience. Self-sacrifice, humility and meekness like that of Christ was the way to overcome party ‘politics’ and restore ecclesial harmony, but what stood in the way was Greek philosophy with its sense of superiority and “we know best” mentality (like the Humanism of today). God chose those who were despised by the Greeks “that no flesh should glory in his presence.” Focus on Christ provides a four part process that leads to eternal life – “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us **wisdom**, and **righteousness**, and **sanctification**, and **redemption**.” The truth, in contrast to philosophy produces Divine wisdom; which in turn develops righteous behaviour; which sets us apart from the world; and leads to life; “that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 2

V.1-6 – “For I determined not to know anything among you, save **Jesus Christ, and him crucified**” – The Apostle was himself the classic representative of a follower of Christ. There was no party spirit with him, or groveling to philosophical nonsense – “And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.”

V.6-16 – Everything depended upon a right and proper understanding of the Word of God, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Some modern translations differ from some older translations for 1 Cor. 2:13. For example, the ESV translates – “And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.” However, Rotherham (and others) translate that verse – “Which we also speak—not in words taught of human wisdom, but in such as are taught of the Spirit, **by spiritual words, spiritual things, explaining**.” This refers to a very important approach. The Bible must be allowed to interpret itself. It has been subject for millennia to men imposing on it their own opinions. “I think it means this,” or “my opinion is that it means this.” The Scriptures actually interpret themselves wonderfully. If a supporting and explanatory passage of Scripture from elsewhere is absent in the exposition of any passage or context, then

it must be put on hold until one or more are found. There is always an explanation, or provision of a principle elsewhere. This is why the Old Testament is absolutely indispensable to the interpretation of the New Testament. It is one book end to end from one perfect mind.

February 21

Exodus 33 and 34

In Ex. 33:2-3, Yahweh indicated He had withdrawn Michael the archangel (“the angel of His presence” – Isa. 63:9) from leading Israel to the Land. The people knew this was a disaster (V.4). Yahweh could not go with them (V.5). They were out of fellowship with Him. Note in Ex. 32:34 the translators of the KJV have used a capital ‘A’ in the word “Angel.” This is incorrect for the angel is not the one promised in Ex. 23:20-23, namely, Michael, but a lesser angel – a mere guide, not the personal representative of their God.

Moses sets about correcting this disaster by firstly insisting on the people removing their personal ornaments as a sign of their readiness to humble themselves. Then he removed the “tent of meeting” (the Tabernacle was not yet built) some distance from the camp. The people watched in awe as the cloud that had stood above the camp moved and stood over the distant tent (V.8-9). The response was “all the people rose up and **bowed themselves down**, every man at the entrance of his tent” (Rotherham). This was an acknowledgement of their sin and a recognition that they were rightly out of fellowship. It was the basis of recovery.

Moses seized the opportunity to intercede for his people by returning to the camp to identify with them (V.11). Notice the repetition of the phrase “I and thy people” in Moses’ intercessory plea (V.12-16). His acceptance by Yahweh as their representative would lead to the acceptance of his people. In this he was a type and forerunner of Christ, our great intercessor.

Moses asked for proof that the angel of Yahweh’s presence would return to lead Israel to the Land. He asked for two things – to be shown Yahweh’s ‘way’ (V.13), and to see God’s physical glory (V.18). The generous response, though qualified by a statement of Yahweh’s sovereignty in matters of mercy, resulted in the declaration of Yahweh’s glorious character, and a revelation of as much of the brilliant glory of the Almighty that a mortal human could handle (Ex. 33:20 – “no *adam* shall see me and live” – 1 Tim. 6:16). As previously noted in these comments, the former is the most important. Manifestations of glory and power may assist in gaining attention, but they do not change men for the Kingdom (2 Pet. 1:16-21). Only the persistent “voice of a gentle whisper” of the Word of God declaring the righteousness and character of God can do that. Hence, the revelation on Mt Sinai (Ex. 34:5-7) as the glory “passed by” (note the use of this phrase in Ex. 33:22; 34:6).

V.10-28 – “Behold, I make a covenant: before **all thy people** I will do **marvels**, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of Yahweh: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee” – Moses had heard the voice of Michael declaring the character of Yahweh, the most powerful influence in our life, but God knew Israel would only be motivated by miracles. This is highlighted in Ps. 103:7 – “He made known his **ways** unto Moses, his **acts** unto the children of Israel.” Miracles do not produce faith; hearing the Word does (Luke 16:31 – “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”). This is the argument of Peter in 2 Pet. 1:16-21.

This was Moses’ **seventh ascent** of the mount (the covenant number). The covenant at Mt Horeb was renewed with warnings about making a league with the Canaanites in the Land (particularly by intermarriage) and worshipping their gods. Keeping the three feasts was emphasized (“Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel”), along with the laws of the firstborn and firstfruits. For remarks on

seething a kid in its mother's milk, see comments on Ex. 23 – February 13. Moses "was there with Yahweh (Michael – Acts 7:38) forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he (i.e. the angel – Deut. 10:4) wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

V.29-35 – Moses face shone with luminosity after conversing on the mountain and in the tent of meeting with Michael the archangel (V.29-30). After speaking with Aaron and the children of Israel, Moses put a veil on his face to obscure the fading of the glory as the luminosity faded away. The italicised word "till" in V.33 (KJV) should be "when" for as soon as he had finished speaking to Israel with an unveiled face, he placed a veil over his face (V.35). Paul explains the meaning of this in 2 Cor. 3:13-16 – "And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." The Law of Moses was to be superseded by Christ. The former had a glory that would fade; the things that belonged to Christ would only increase in glory (see 2 Cor. 4:6-7, 16-18).

Sadly, Jews who clung to the Law actually had a veil on their face (2 Cor. 3:14-15). We are able to look at Christ's 'unveiled' face as in a mirror. The more we focus on the character of Christ who manifested perfectly his Father's character (Yahweh's 'way' – John 1:14), the more we are transformed into the same likeness as Paul says in 2 Cor. 3:18 (Rotherham) – "And, we all, with unveiled face, receiving and reflecting, the glory of the Lord, into the same image, are being transformed, from glory into glory,—even as from a Spirit that is Lord." It is a stage-by-stage process. It doesn't happen quickly.

Psalm 90 – Teach us to number our days

V.1 – **"A Prayer of Moses the man of God.** Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations" – Psalm 90 marks the commencement of Book 4 of the Psalter. In this section Yahweh is the dominant name of God employed, being used at least twice in each psalm and as many eleven times in two of them. Accordingly, the theme of salvation is prominent, and unsurprisingly in that context, the Kingdom Psalms (Ps. 95-100) are included.

Being a psalm of Moses, there is a strong reflection on the wilderness generation and their tribulations in the wilderness as they wasted away. Moses himself could not enter the land at that time because he spoke unadvisedly with his lips in frustration at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 20). There were about 500 funerals a week as the entire adult population aged 20 and above, except for Caleb and Joshua and a handful of Levites perished over the course of 38 years. Moses died at age 120, but the youngest of those 20 and above condemned in Num. 14 did not reach the age of 60. When Moses reflected on this by saying in V.10 – "The days of our years are threescore years and ten (70); and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years (80), yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" he would have had in mind that no condemned adult he led through the wilderness attained to a normal lifespan. It was indeed true for them that "we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled" for God had exposed their iniquities and "secret sins" (V.7).

The psalm concludes with an appeal by Moses for his people to be turned around by God – "O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." If this was to occur they could bring forth fruit to the glory of God – "And let the beauty of Yahweh our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

So, what are we to learn from this sombre psalm? Perhaps it is the appeal to God – "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (V.12).

Psalm 91 – Abiding under the shadow of the Almighty

V.1 – “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High (*Elyon*) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (*Shaddai*) – It is thought this psalm completes Ps. 90 and is attributed to both Moses and Joshua. Whereas Ps. 90 dwelt on the condemned who would not enter the Land, this psalm deals with those who finally did, including Joshua. It has been suggested that V.1 are the words of Moses, and V.2 that of Joshua in response. Then in V.3-13, Moses is said to speak to Joshua providing assurance of Divine help, and in V.14-16, Yahweh speaks to Joshua (as a type of Christ) providing further assurance.

The Messianic character of the psalm is not in doubt, as the tempter drew on this psalm in tempting Christ to test God’s angelic protection of Messiah in V.11-12 cited in Matt. 4:6. The concluding words of this psalm would have given Christ great encouragement that he would endure the trials that would come upon him as they did upon Moses and Joshua. There was this assurance from his Father – “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.” As a result of Christ’s absolute dependence upon his Father, the outcome would be victory over the flesh (Amalek = the serpent; see comments on Ex. 17) and eternal life – “With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

1 Corinthians 3

V.1-9 – “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ” – In chapter 1:10-12, the Apostle had referred to reports of partiality causing division in the ecclesia at Corinth. Some were vocal supporters of Paul, others of Apollos, others of Peter, and some of Christ. This revealed an immature childishness as hinted at in this verse. The word “carnal” is *sarkikos* and means “pertaining to the flesh.” They were spiritually immature and were allowing the fleshly approaches from their former life outside the truth to come to the fore. They needed to understand that all labourers in the vineyard “are one” for “we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” A party spirit such as they displayed was destructive.

The Apostle Paul described himself as “a wise master builder” in verse 10. He added that we are all builders, building on the foundation laid by the Apostles; i.e. the Lord Jesus Christ (V.11 – “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”). He then listed the materials that may be used to construct ‘spiritual buildings’ (V.12 – “Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble”). The outcome of that labour will be tested at the Judgement Seat (fire being the symbol for Divine judgement). Sadly, some of that labour will have produced outcomes that will not endure the trial of fire (V.13).

As the prophet Azariah said to Asa king of Judah returning from a miraculous victory to continue his reformation (2 Chron. 15:7) – “Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded” (cp. V.14). However, in V.15 Paul says – “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” Many faithful ‘builders’ will experience sadness at the Judgement Seat when some of those in whose lives they have had substantial influence are found to be spiritual material that cannot endure the ‘fire’ – “wood, hay, stubble.” But for their faithful service in building they will receive the reward of eternal life.

V.16-23 – “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” – In 2 Cor. 6:16, the Apostle was to write to this ecclesia that the ecclesia is ‘a temple of living God’ for God had said, “I will **dwell in them**, and **walk in them**; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (ASV). Some of the behaviour of members

of this ecclesia did not recognize that calling – “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Some frequented the harlots’ temple on Mt Corinthus behind the town (1 Cor. 6:15-20; 10:18-22), and clearly some consorted with harlots. The source of this behaviour was the free thinking of the Greek world of which modern day Humanism would be proud. The thinking of man sets aside the mind of God expressed in the Word and thinks for itself. That is the mantra of Humanism today. But as back then, so it is now – “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” To be in Christ in the fullest sense requires abandonment of the thinking of the flesh for “ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”

February 22

Exodus 35

In Ex. 35, the work of collecting and preparing materials for the construction of the Tabernacle and its furniture began. There were two very important principles established for our building in the house of God (1 Cor. 3:9-17). These are willingness and wisdom.

The people were invited to make contributions to both materials and labour. This was their opportunity to show where their true interests and desires lay. It is useful to highlight the emphasis in this chapter and the next of willingness and wisdom.

V.5 – “Take ye from among you an offering unto Yahweh: whosoever is of **a willing heart**, let him bring it, an offering of Yahweh.”

V.10 – “And every **wise hearted** among you shall come, and make all that Yahweh hath commanded.”

V.21 – “And they came, **every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing**, and they brought Yahweh’s offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

V.22 – “And they came, both men and women, as many as were **willing hearted**.”

V.25 – “And all the women that were **wise hearted** did spin with their hands...”

V.26 – “And all the women **whose heart stirred them up in wisdom...**”

V.29 – “The children of Israel brought **a willing offering** unto Yahweh, every man and woman, **whose heart made them willing** to bring for all manner of work, which Yahweh had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.”

Ex. 36:1 – “Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and **every wise hearted man**, in whom Yahweh put **wisdom and understanding** to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that Yahweh had commanded.”

V.2 – “And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and **every wise hearted man**, in whose heart Yahweh had put **wisdom**, even every one **whose heart stirred him up** to come unto the work to do it.”

It is hard to miss the principles involved in this repeated emphasis on willingness and wisdom, and a desire to be involved in the construction of the Tabernacle.

However, opportunities to contribute did not last all that long. The preoccupied, reluctant and the lazy who lacked the wisdom to grasp the opportunities given to them missed out because the response was so great that more than enough was contributed to the work.

Ex. 36:4-7 – “And all the **wise men**, that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made; And they spake unto Moses, saying, **The**

people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which Yahweh commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. **So the people were restrained from bringing.** For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

The exhortation is obvious – do not let the opportunities to contribute to the building of God's 'house' pass you by. The "cares of this life" (Luke 21:34), or a lack of interest can impede the willingness that comes from wisely perceiving the times in which we live (1 Chron. 12:32). Soon there will be opportunities no more (Matt. 25:8-9 underlines the principle).

Psalm 92 – "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree"

V.1-2 – **"A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day.** It is a good thing to give thanks unto Yahweh, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High; to shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night" – The Sabbath day prefigured the Millennium. It is clear this psalm projects to that time. This may be the reason why the Divine name "Yahweh" is used **seven** times. Edersheim says this psalm was the official temple psalm for the Sabbath, and quotes Maimonedes who wrote, "the sabbath was symbolic of the millennial kingdom." The other title used of Yahweh in V.1 is Elyon ("most High"), and when this title is used it invariably draws from Gen. 14 where it first occurs four times.

V.3-9 – The praise of V.2 is for what God does for the righteous, and what He intends for the wicked, and this is spelt out in this bracket of verses.

V.10-11 – The power ("horn") God employs in the lives of the righteous is His Word – "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" (symbol for God's Word).

V.12 – "The righteous shall flourish like the **palm tree**" – Quite apart from being a symbol for the nations (Ex. 15:27; Rev. 7:9), the palm tree is descriptive of the character of righteous people. The palm tree has several characteristics that speak of this:

- They insist on growing upright towards the sun. Men have weighed palm trees down only to find they insist of growing upwards. The nature we possess has many weights that drag us earthwards (Heb. 12:1 – "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us..."), so there must be a conscious effort to aim towards the "sun of righteousness" (Mal. 4:2).
- The foliage of the palm tree is evergreen. Green is the colour of life, particularly eternal life (Rev. 4:3).
- The fruit of the palm tree grows at its head. Those who seek righteousness know that it can only be attained by what is allowed to go on in their head. It is in the mind that the principles and truths of God are implanted (James 1:18-23). Daily imbibing of the Word is essential to producing fruit from the head.
- The roots of the palm tree are firmly fixed in the ground, which often is sand (its natural habitat). Anyone who has tried to remove a palm tree knows how firmly they are grounded. So it is with those who pursue righteousness in an unstable environment (Eph. 3:17; Col. 1:23; 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:58).
- Unlike most other trees which grow from the outside out, hence the age rings in trees, the palm tree grows from within outwards (see article below). This is what happens to those who seek after righteousness. They grow from within.

(Cited from Quora) Palm trees don't have growth rings. In fact, you can liken them to a "big grass" and just like grass, they are monocots. Palm trees do not produce cambium. They are

incapable of the ring-shaped secondary growth seen in other trees. Cut a palm tree down and you'll see tiny circular vessels distributed evenly throughout the trunk. These are vascular tissues, xylem and phloem. Stem cells lining these vessels produce "anomalous secondary growth" to thicken young trunks, but once the trunk reaches its maximum diameter this no longer occurs. This keeps palm trunks narrow and stiff, perfect for supporting their frond crowns.

"he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" – Righteousness leads ultimately to eternal life. The cedars of Lebanon were known for their beauty and longevity. The righteous are compared also to the cedar of Lebanon, an incorruptible wood, and extremely long-lived (some trees they say, older than 1,000 years). The cedar gives us the idea of majesty, stability, durableness, and incorruptibility. This is very fitting to represent those who aim for immortality – "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."

V.13-15 – "Those that be planted in the house of Yahweh shall flourish in the courts of our God" – Trees of righteousness firmly rooted in the house of God (the ecclesia) continue to produce fruit, even in old age demonstrating that it is a work of God.

Psalm 93 – Holiness becomes God's house for ever

V.1 – "Yahweh reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; Yahweh is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved" – The Divine name is used five times in this psalm in just 5 verses (the psalm speaks of a coming time of Divine grace). It is clearly a Kingdom psalm and precedes the accepted Kingdom psalms (95 to 100).

We learn from the Talmud that by Jewish tradition this psalm is ascribed to Friday because God created all things and rested on the Sabbath day. So it is possible to read this Psalm and see in it the wonder of God's creative and controlling power, to see Him sitting upon the circle of the earth clothed with strength and having established the world that it cannot be moved, having set limits to the rivers and boundaries to the seas to control their angry movements, and above all having issued "testimonies" that are very sure. It is also possible that the Israelites saw in this psalm the majesty and power of God who had established them in their land, having subdued all their enemies and thought of the throne as being the throne upon which God had set his king. It is also possible that they rejoiced in that they thought that the kingdom would be without end, but disregarded their own weaknesses which necessitated their removal from the land.

Whilst the psalm presents a picture of the coming Age, it also speaks of God's continuing authority amongst the nations. He is in control and His throne has been established from old. Furthermore, His testimonies are very sure and are just as relevant for us today. Because of these truths, holiness becometh his house forever, and this should never be forgotten.

1 Corinthians 4

V.1-3 – "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" – The Apostle Paul had been savagely criticized by some in the ecclesia at Corinth who were undermining his work (2 Cor. 11:3-4,12-15). They accused him of narcissism, alleging he was doing what he did for self-aggrandizement and self-interest. Paul had examined his motives upon hearing this criticism (it is always good to do this despite the validity or otherwise of the criticism). He had found no truth in it, but knew that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). We can decieve ourselves.

V.4 – (ESV) "For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me." However, Paul warned his critics that they too will

be examined thoroughly at the Judgement Seat if they failed to apply the same rigorous examination to themselves.

V.5 – “judge nothing before the time.” Paul means that we have no authority to judge the motives of others. Only Christ can do that. His rule for us to ‘judge’ (i.e. assess others) was, “ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16-20). At the Judgement Seat the motives of all responsible people will be examined, for he “will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” The Greek word for “counsels” is *boule* – volition, purpose, plan. Weymouth translates – “Therefore form no premature judgements, but wait until the Lord returns. He will both bring to light the secrets of darkness and **will openly disclose the motives that have been in people’s hearts**; and then the praise which each man deserves will come to him from God.”

V.6-16 – Paul goes on to repudiate the party spirit that had gripped the ecclesia, and to list the sacrifices he and his companions in the work made for the benefit of others (this being proof of his faithful stewardship – V.2); treatment that proved his concern for them as a father – “For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many **fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,” enabling him to make the call – “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.” However, he warned them that as a father he could also apply discipline, and there was good reason why it may need to be applied.

1 Corinthians 5

V.1 – “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have (*echō* – to hold; i.e. sexually) his father’s wife” – The Apostle addressed a serious moral issue that the ecclesia in Corinth had not dealt with appropriately by withdrawal from the offender (in V.5 it is explained – “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh”). He warned that the ‘leaven’ of such immorality would permeate the whole ecclesia if left unaddressed (V.6). Then he turned to the implications for them on their Memorial service.

V.8 – “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of **sincerity** and truth.” The Passover of old was eaten in the absence of leaven (Ex. 12:8), and was followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 13:6-7). The principle was taught that life in Christ (our Passover) was to be free from the leaven of moral corruption in perpetuity (to the 7th Day). They needed “sincerity” – *eikrinea* – clearness, that is, (by implication) purity. The root word signifies “to be judged by sunlight”, i.e. like a glass of water held up to the sun to be examined for impurities. That is what is meant by, “Let a man examine himself” (1 Cor. 11:28).

V.9-11 – The Apostle reminded them of his counsel not to keep company with “fornicators” (like the offender of V.1), but acknowledged this was not possible in the normal activities of life. He advised, “with such an one no not to eat.” By “eat” here he does not mean eating a normal meal or sharing morning tea, but rather eating at the table of the Lord (bread and wine), for that is his context (V.8).

February 23

Exodus 36 – The work of building the Tabernacle begins

The example and instruction of Bezaleel and Aholiab so impacted the zeal and skill of the Israelites, that they gave themselves enthusiastically to the work before them. Willingness to

spend and be spent in the work was manifested by them, providing an example of dedication in labour such as should be displayed by labourers in God's service in every age.

V.8 – “made he them” – Bezaleel represented all his fellow labourers. The phrase “made he” and its equivalent “he made” occur 56 times between Ex. 36:8 and 39:22 and “they made” occurs 12 times. This underscores the enormous amount of activity involved over a space of six months to make all the things that had been revealed to Moses on the mount.

Psalm 94 – Encouragement for Messiah

V.1-8 – “O Yahweh God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself” – This psalm is ascribed to David by some, although it is difficult to establish a firm background which might have adduced such a psalm from David. It is evident that he was under considerable pressure, so some attribute it to his conflict with Hadarezer king of Zobah and the Syrians where for a time things did not go well (1 Chron. 18:3-5). However, the early verses could find a place in a number of events in Israel's history, including the Babylonian overthrow of BC 587. What is very clear is the Messianic character of the final verses. Along the way some interesting reflections arise.

V.9 – “He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?” As James reminded his readers – “...men, which are made after the similitude of God” (James 3:9), Yahweh is a physical being and we have been made in His image (Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 11:7).

V.12 – “Blessed is the man whom thou chasatest, O Yahweh, and teachest him out of thy law.” This Hebrew parallelism teaches that the best chastisement we can receive is from the Word of God. We tend to think that trials and problems are the way God chastises His people. That may be the case sometimes, but the best and most effective chastisement comes from His Word.

V.16-23 – “Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” – The voice of Messiah emerges from the gloom. Faced with murderous enemies in the hierarchy of Judea, Christ looked to his Father to guide him through the trials leading to crucifixion – “Unless Yahweh had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.” When sorely troubled in the Garden, his Father sent an angel to strengthen him (Luke 22:43) – “When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Yahweh, held me up.”

V.19 – “In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul” – It is difficult to appreciate fully what this would have meant to our Lord. He needed support and as his mind raced in the final hours, the comforts provided by his Father were crucial to success.

V.20 – “Shall the **throne** of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?” – The power of Annas who became high priest in AD 6 was so great that he was deposed in AD 15 by the Roman legate and Caiaphas his son-in-law became titular high priest, although Annas remained the real power behind the office. His “throne” was overthrown in AD 70 after all 5 of his natural sons became high priest in turn (it was a dynasty). Poetically, he was assassinated in AD 66 for promoting the notion that the Jews should submit to Rome. They had gathered “themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn(ed) the innocent blood” (V.21). They failed to recognize his immovable trust that “Yahweh is my defence (*miśgāb* – a cliff or other lofty or inaccessible place = a figure for heaven) and my God is the rock (*tzur* – a huge boulder for shelter on earth) of my refuge,” and consequently, “he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, Yahweh our God shall cut them off,” and He certainly did.

Psalm 95 – There is a rest for the people of God

V.1-2 – “O come, let us sing unto Yahweh: let us make a joyful noise to the rock (*tzur*) of our salvation” – The Septuagint adds a superscription – “The praise of a Song by David” (which may, or may not be reliable). This is the first of the Kingdom psalms. It is an important fact that of the 150 psalms only 13 have historical notes appended and each of them is a psalm of David. Furthermore apart from the historical notes there is nothing in those psalms which would establish their setting, it is as though the Spirit specifically avoids tying any psalm down to a particular set of circumstances since this would limit its application in the mind of the reader. Instead he draws from his own personal experiences to compose psalms containing deep spiritual truths which are applicable to all people of all time. This is implied by the statement – “make a joyful noise unto him with psalms” (plural). Such is this beautiful psalm.

V.3-6 – “For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods” – This assertion is validated by what follows. His creative power witnesses to His uniqueness far beyond the non-existent gods of the nations – “In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.” That recognition leads to humility and worship – “let us kneel before Yahweh our maker,” for like Israel of old, “we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand” (John 10:11,16 – “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.”

V.7-11 – “To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work” – V.7-11 are cited by the Apostle in Heb. 3:7-11, and V.7 in Heb. 3:15 and again in Heb. 4:7 with various allusions to this psalm in between. This psalm dominates the Apostle’s warning to the Hebrews (some of whom were contemplating leaving Christ and going back to the Law). It is based on the Sabbath day which is inferred in the words of V.11 – “Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest” (cited Heb. 3:11,18; 4:3.5). This proves that the psalm is a Kingdom psalm – “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

1 Corinthians 6 – Behaviour that excludes from the Kingdom

The Apostle upbraided some Corinthian brethren for going to courts of law to resolve disputes. Then he made a statement that is curious (V.3) – “Know ye not that **we shall judge angels?** how much more things that pertain to this life?” It is clear the Apostle is speaking about the future (“we shall”). The word “angels” can sometimes be used of human messengers, but Paul is actually speaking of the role of the saints in the Kingdom. The word “judge” is *krino* and one of the many variations on the meaning of the word states – “of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgement on the deeds and words of others.” The context here is about managing and resolving matters of everyday life. The angels will not be rulers in the Kingdom (Heb. 2:5), but the saints will be (Rev. 5:9-10). They will be administrators in a society wherein the angels will be present as observers and companions (Rev. 5:13). The angels will not need instruction or correction, but while among men they will be subject to the administration of Christ and his saints.

V.9-11 – As a prelude to the Apostle’s stinging condemnation of brethren who proudly frequented the harlots’ temple on Mt Corinthus, he made it very clear that some forms of behaviour would exclude from the Kingdom – “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither **fornicators**, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.” He reminded them that they were in Christ – “such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are

sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" and they should have left their past ways behind.

V.12 – "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." Paul used the mantra of the Libertines in the ecclesia at Corinth who had no problem frequenting the harlots' temple on Mt Corinthus (1 Cor. 10:20-23 – note the same terms are used in V.23).

V.13 – "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." Their mantra asserted that God had made food for the belly, and the belly to consume the food. The inference was that God had similarly made the reproductive organs of the body in male and female and these could be freely used in the harlots' temple as he infers in verses 15 and 16. The counter reactions of the ascetics to the libertines in the ecclesia became the subject of chapter 7.

February 24

Exodus 37

This chapter describes how the instructions for the fashioning of the items specified on the mount were meticulously carried out.

V.1 – "Bezaleel" = "in the shadow (i.e. protection) of God". Note the recent reading in Ps. 91:1 – "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Bezaleel and his fellow labourers occupied a highly privileged position, and so do builders in God's house (the ecclesia) today.

Psalm 96 – Yahweh worshipped in the beauty of holiness

In 1 Chron. 16:7 we read – "Then on **that day** David delivered first this psalm to thank Yahweh into the hand of Asaph and his brethren" – The day was that memorable time when David finally brought the Ark to Zion to install it in the tent (*ohel* – round tent) he had erected for it. What follows in 1 Chron. 16 is a lengthy psalm that is reflected in Ps. 96 and Ps. 105 and other psalms. Being a Kingdom psalm, it is not surprising that David looked into the future because the whole purpose of what he did that day was to project to the time when Christ will rule as a Melchizedek king-priest (see comments on 2 Sam. 6 on July 21).

V.1 – "O sing unto Yahweh a new song: sing unto Yahweh, all the earth" – Singing a "new song" is indicative of sharing immortality with Christ (Rev. 5:9; 14:3). See comments on Ps. 98 below.

V.2-3 – "Sing unto Yahweh, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his wonders among all people" – This can only be fully realized in the Kingdom Age. This psalm was appropriately used for the Sabbath services in old time. It is notable that when these 'Sabbath' psalms began with Ps. 92 there was a superscription, "A psalm or song for the Sabbath day," but there is no superscription on the intervening psalms until Ps. 98. It is suggested that it is possible that Psalms 92 to 97 are all one psalm, but divided into parts for use on different Sabbaths.

V.4-6 – "For Yahweh is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods" – This is virtually a repetition of Ps. 95:3. There will come a day when all the false gods of the nations will have been exposed and destroyed and only Yahweh will be worshipped, and much of it in His Temple – "Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his **sanctuary**." The word "sanctuary" is *miqdâsh* – a consecrated thing or place, especially a palace, sanctuary. This can only be a reference to the Temple of Ezekiel's

prophecy, the “house of prayer for all peoples” (Isa. 56:7) and Isa. 16:5 – “And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle (*ohel*) of David, judging, and seeking judgement, and hastening righteousness” (a Melchizedek king-priest). This is further established by V.8 – “Give unto Yahweh the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his **courts**.” Only a literal Temple can fulfil this verse.

V.9-13 – “O worship Yahweh in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth” – The two Hebrew words translated “the beauty of holiness” are *hădârâh qôdesh* and are translated by Rotherham as “the adornment of holiness” and by the RSV – “in holy array.” While the most important thing in that day will be correctness of heart and uprightness of spirit, it is clear that in the Kingdom Age, men will not be permitted to worship in Yahweh’s house shabbily dressed in the “just come as you are” mantra of modern ‘Christianity.’ There will be universal respect for the sanctity of that place. But this denouement will require massive judgements (Ps. 110:6; Jer. 25:33) – “for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness (see Acts 17:31), and the people with his truth.”

Psalm 97 – Armageddon results in the Kingdom established

V.1-5 – “Yahweh reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof” – Ps. 97 is the last of the Sabbath psalms. It too, is a Kingdom psalm and focuses on the way the Kingdom will be established by extensive warfare. Armageddon is clearly referred to – “Clouds and darkness are round about him” is redolent of Zeph. 1:15 – “That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” Similarly, the words of V.3 are obviously the language of Armageddon – “A fire goeth before him, and **burneth** up his enemies round about.” This matches Isa. 31:9 when the Assyrian (Gog) “shall be afraid of the ensign (Christ), saith Yahweh, whose **fire** is in Zion, and his **furnace** in Jerusalem.” To this can be added Mal. 4:1 – “behold, the day cometh, that shall **burn** as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall **burn** them up.” V.4-5 support the above.

V.6-12 – The mood changes in these verses. The victory over the nations is complete and the righteous rejoice for “Judah” is saved (Zech. 12:7). What is the exhortation for us as we await Divine intervention in the earth? The answer is provided in V.10 – “Ye that love Yahweh, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked,” just as He did for “just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked”...for “Yahweh knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” and so the advice is – “Rejoice in Yahweh, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”

Psalm 98 – Make a joyful noise unto Yahweh all peoples

V.1 – “**A Psalm.** O sing unto Yahweh **a new song**; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory” – This psalm has a simple superscription – “A psalm.” It seems the Spirit has added it to the Kingdom psalms, for it continues smoothly from the preceding psalms. The focus is on the universality of God’s supremacy in the earth when “all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest” (Zech. 1:11). This can be the only conclusion from V.2 – “Yahweh, hath made known, his salvation, Before the eyes of the nations, hath he revealed his righteousness” (Rotherham). Having had mercy on His own people first, He will turn to the Gentiles, “all the ends of the earth have seen the

salvation of our God,” and they with will “make a joyful noise unto Yahweh, all the earth.” The psalm ends with universal praise to Yahweh (V.4-9).

There are 9 occurrences of the phrase “a new song” in Scripture – 7 in the O.T and 2 in the N.T. (Rev. 5:9; 14:3). If the context of each is examined it will be seen that the new song is sung at a time when Yahweh has “gotten him the victory” (V.1). In Ps. 149:1; Rev. 5:9 and 14:3 the saints rejoice after being made immortal. Therein lies a key. A “new song” is called ‘new’ despite the fact that we are told what the words of the song are. It is ‘new’ because it can only be sung with full appreciation when one is immortal.

Psalm 99 – The righteousness of God vindicated in the earth

V.1-5 – “Yahweh reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved” – This is again a Kingdom psalm following on from Psalms 95 to 98. Its focus on why the outcome in those psalms will be achieved, namely, the vindication of the righteousness of God throughout the whole earth – “The king’s strength also loveth judgement; thou dost establish equity, thou executest **judgement** and **righteousness** in Jacob.”

V.6-9 – “Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon Yahweh, and he answered them” – Israel’s future redemption will be a repeat of the first Exodus under Moses and Aaron. Yahweh’s righteousness was vindicated through them, and later by Samuel. It will be Christ, the Great High Priest who will redeem Judah and Israel, the latter by Elijah in the Second Exodus. Those considered unworthy of life in the Land at the time of Armageddon, and the rebels “in the wilderness of the peoples” will be removed (as were their fathers – V.8; Zech. 13:8; Ezek. 20:38), so that those who survive will “Exalt Yahweh our God, and worship at his holy hill; for Yahweh our God is holy.” The righteousness of God will be upheld, vindicated and glorified.

1 Corinthians 7 – Questions on marriage relationships

Many errors can be avoided in the interpretation of 1 Cor. 7 if we first establish the overall structure of the section, and identify the various groups of individuals that the Apostle Paul addresses.

Overall structure

Beginning with chapter 7:1, the Apostle employs structural markers throughout the remainder of the Epistle to signify a change of subject as he progressively deals with matters about which the Corinthians had written to him. The words '*de peri*' (“now concerning”) occur in chapter 7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1,12, while ‘*de*’ (“now”) is found introducing a new subject in Chapter 10:1; 11:2; and 15:1. It is vital to recognize these markers in chapter 7 in order to avoid confusing Paul’s answers to two separate issues concerning marriage. Verses 1-24 constitute his reply to a number of questions concerning the propriety of sexual relations in marriage, and the consequent status of mixed marriages. On the other hand, verses 25-38 constitute his answer to a question concerning ‘virgins’ (i.e. those never married, but amongst whom there were some engaged to marry during a time of distress for that time). This section cannot be used to justify remarriage after divorce as has been done.

The resulting outline of chapter 7 would be as follows:

- V.1-24 Directions to the married and those formerly married.
- V.1-7 The ascetics answered – instruction on marital duties.
- V.8-9 Advice to widowers and widows to abide unmarried.
- V.10-11 Christ’s command to the married – divorce and remarriage prohibited.

V.12-16 The status of mixed marriages and the responsibilities of believing partners.
 V.17-24 The governing principle – Remain in the situation of life in which the truth is found.
 V.25-38 Directions and advice to those who had never married.
 V.39-40 Summary – The law of marriage restated.

“Pauline privilege”

This is the title given to the alleged Apostolic permission provided by Paul to deserted and divorced believers allowing remarriage. That such permission does not exist is evident from both the context and the words employed by the Apostle, not to mention the overwhelming weight of Scriptural testimony that exists. It has been asserted that the Apostle oscillates between Christ's commandments on the one hand, and his own advice on the other throughout the chapter, and that a contrast exists between Christ's limited but definite laws and Paul's more extensive Apostolic advice. Christ is said to have confined his teaching to marriage in the Truth where both partners are either believers or responsible to Divine Law, while it is left to the Apostle to offer advice to those involved in mixed marriages: i.e. advice which, it is alleged, includes the right to divorce and remarry where continuation of the marriage is impossible.

False interpretation of 1 Cor. 7:15 is one cause of confusion on the Apostle's teachings – “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under **bondage** in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” The word “bondage” is *douloō* and means “to enslave.” The only thing remotely related to ‘slavery’ in marriage is the conjugal obligation Paul has outlined in verses 1 to 5. That is why he said “let every man **have** his own wife” (V.2). He doesn't mean every man should marry, for that would be contradictory to V.1 and V.7-8. The word “have” is *echo* – to hold to. Its use in 1 Cor. 5:1 indicates its meaning here – “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should **have** (*echo*) his father's wife.” Clearly, it means sexual relations, not marriage.

Another difficulty arises from the KJV translation in verse 27 – “Art thou bound unto a **wife**? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a **wife**? seek not a **wife**.”

The word “wife” in the Greek is *gune* signifying ‘a woman, either married or unmarried’. The context determines which. Here, Paul is addressing ‘virgins’ (those never married). Some in Corinth had made a commitment to marry (i.e. were ‘engaged’ in our language), but times were tough and some were rethinking that commitment. Paul's advice is “if you have already backed out, then stay single. If you decide to go ahead and marry, you have not sinned” (V.28).

The KJV confuses male and female in 1 Cor. 7:36-38. Rotherham's translation is accurate and overcomes the obscurity – “If however anyone considereth it behaving unseemly towards **his** virginity, if **he** should be beyond the bloom of life,—and, thus, it ought to come about, what he chooseth, let **him** do,—**he** sinneth not: let them marry: But, **he** that standeth in **his** heart, steadfast, having no necessity, but hath authority concerning **his** own will, and, this, hath determined in **his** own heart,—to preserve **his** own virginity, well shall he do. So that, he that giveth in marriage **his own virginity**, doeth, well; and, he that giveth it not, shall do, better.” There is no direct reference to a female in this passage.

(A full set of verse-by-verse notes on 1 Cor. 7:1-27 can be found in **Appendix 8 of August**).

February 25

Exodus 38 – The Tabernacle and all its accoutrements completed

The work of construction was completed by the workmen especially endowed for the purpose. A correct accounting of the people's offerings was made.

V.8 – “And he made the **laver** of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the **looking-glasses** of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” – The following comments from the Exodus Expositor by Bro. H.P. Mansfield are useful – “And he made the laver of brass” — The instructions concerning the laver are briefly given in Ex. 30:18-21, and further details are now supplied. Before attending at the altar, or before entering the Holy Place, the priests were required to wash hands and feet in the laver (Ex. 40:30-31). Paul identifies the laver with the Word of God (see Eph. 5:26 where “washing” from the Gr. *loutron*, can be rendered “laver,” and see Tit. 3:5; John 15:3; Ps. 119:9). The action of the priests, therefore, demonstrated the constant need of application to the Word as a cleansing agent.

“Looking glasses” is better rendered as mirrors. They comprised highly polished bronze or copper plates, circular or oval in shape, with long handles. Illustrations of these have been found on Egyptian monuments, and samples are displayed in the Cairo Museum. Normally these were items of vanity, but the women sacrificed their interest in mere display, so as to donate the metal for the construction of the laver at which the priests would wash. The action of these women set an example that sisters today can follow in the strengthening of the hands of brethren in their work in the Truth. Let them also sacrifice some of their objects of vanity that the latter may be served. This is in accordance with the instructions of Paul to Timothy in which he calls upon brethren to act as priests (1 Tim. 2:8), whilst he exhorts sisters to set aside objects of vanity in order to give themselves to useful service in Christ (vv.9-10). Peter does likewise (1 Pet. 3:3-4). When these instructions are carried out, many a heart-break in the home will be avoided, for the home in which both parents are devoted to the work of the Truth, is the one in which true happiness is found.

“At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” – This “tabernacle” was the temporary tent set up by Moses pending the building and erection of the proper tabernacle. However, it is obvious from such expressions as are found in 1 Sam. 1:9-12; 2:22 that the practice of gathering at such places of worship was followed by godly Israelitish women even after the tabernacle proper was set up.

Psalm 100 – Make a joyful noise all lands

V.1 – “**A Psalm of praise.** Make a joyful noise unto Yahweh, all ye lands” – This final Kingdom psalm in the bracket from 95 to 100 is a call for all peoples of the earth to submit to, and worship Yahweh – “Serve Yahweh with gladness: come before his **presence** with singing” (V.2). They will do this a handful of times in a long lifetime (Isa. 65:20,22) by coming to “the house of prayer for all peoples” – “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” for they will have learnt that Yahweh “is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” Who would not want to be present in that day?

Psalm 101 – A standard that only Christ could meet

V.1 – “**A Psalm of David.** I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Yahweh, will I sing” – This psalm was written under inspiration by an uncompromised David at the height of his spiritual life. It is evident that it was at a time when his long-held desire of bringing the Ark of

the Covenant from its twenty-year sojourn in Kirjath-jearim to Zion was close to realization. This is evident from verse 2 – “O when wilt thou come unto me?” He had contemplated this from his teenage years in Bethlehem (Ps. 132:1-8). Now as all Israel came to make him king, he could see the way clear to accomplish it. He sets out his determination to eradicate all evil from his own life and from the nation. The ideals expressed set forth the future mission of Christ when he comes to establish his Kingdom.

However, in the wake of David’s sin with Bathsheba and its awful consequences for Uriah and David’s family, there is a different tone in the psalms David wrote at that time (Ps. 38:41; 51, etc). It is important to set the bar high when we start out, but to be conscious of the inherent weaknesses of human nature. All too often the words of Jer. 17:9 prove to be true – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (ESV).

1 Corinthians 8 – Sacrificing for those for whom Christ died

V.1 – “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love (*agapē* – sacrificial love of the will) edifieth” – In this chapter the Apostle deals with the problem in the ecclesia at Corinth over food offered to idols. His conclusion is that we have an obligation to those “for whom Christ died” to avoid anything that might undermine their conscience and sensitivities regardless of its veracity or worthiness in our opinion.

V.10 – “For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols” – A particularly sore point for the Apostle were those brethren in Corinth who went up the harlots’ temple on Mt Corinthus and who ate the food that had been offered to idols. Not only were they in great jeopardy themselves, but the effects of their example on those with a sensitive conscience (even though it was not soundly based) were likely to be very destructive, for “when ye **sin** so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye **sin** against Christ.”

Paul said he would be a vegetarian for life (V.13) if there was any danger he might be a stumbling-block to a “little one” by eating meat offered to idols (Luke 17:2). Today, we live in a Humanistic world where the rights of the individual are placed above responsibilities to God and fellow man. The only ‘rights’ that society seems to want to uphold is the ‘right’ of the wicked to commit the most abominable deeds that are roundly condemned by the Word of God. In this environment, there are constant challenges for the servants of Christ to so order their lives that no-one loses their life eternally due to our lack of consideration for others (Phil. 2:1-5).

1 Corinthians 9 – Sacrifice that by all means some might be saved

V.1-20 – Paul had enemies in the ecclesia at Corinth who tried to undermine his authority by accusations of self-interest (1 Cor. 4:1-4). In defending his work he had to assert that he had not used any of the benefits that were rightfully his as the Apostle to the Gentiles. His sole aim was to save as many as possible, and he used a variety of approaches.

V.21 – “To them that are without law, as without law, (**being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,**) that I might gain them that are without law” – Some have claimed we have ‘freedom’ in Christ and that therefore we are free agents. This is not so, and the highlighted parenthesis in verse 21 (above) reveals that. We are under law to Christ, but not under the code of the Law of Moses. However, that law was “holy, just and good” (Rom. 7:12), and enshrined all the unchangeable principles of God (Mal. 3:6). These same principles are embraced by the law of Christ commonly referred to as “The commandments of Christ.” We

are not free agents to chart our own course in life. In fact, the commandments of Christ are more challenging than the Law, for they deal with motivation and require constant introspection.

In V.27 the Apostle used the athletic games of his day as a vehicle to provide essential lessons for success in the race for life – “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (V.24). Serious athletes make many sacrifices and maintain a good diet, as well as run with **purpose** and **intent** to win. So should those in the race for eternal life.

In the Greek games there was a herald who proclaimed the rules prior to the events. He would run around the arena loudly shouting the rules of the contest. Paul’s concern was that as both the herald and a competing athlete himself, he might fall short of the standards set for spiritual athletes. If so, he would become a “castaway” (V.27). Accordingly, he said – “I **keep under** my body, and bring it into subjection.” The word *hupōpiazō* means to strike under the eye, or as in the familiar term, ‘to give someone a black eye’. The only other place this word is found is in Luke 18:5 where in the parable of the unjust judge he says of the poor widow, “Lest by her continual coming she **weary** me.” Its use there is a graphic hyperbole, but here it is another way of saying that Paul had “crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts” (Gal. 5:24), or alternatively, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth” (Col. 3:5).

February 26

Exodus 39 – The holy garments for the priests

All the parts of the tabernacle having been made, Bezaleel and Aholiab took in hand the priestly garments which have already been described. The holy garments for Aaron were made carefully in accordance with the instructions given to Moses. The constant repetition of the statement, “As Yahweh commanded Moses...” (V.1,5,7, etc.), not only shows that close attention was given to the commands received, but also that God heeds and records when this is done. Finally, all the garments were inspected and approved by Moses.

V.30 – “And they made the **plate** of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO YAHWEH” – The Hebrew word for “plate” is *tsŷyts* – glistening, that is, a burnished plate (Masculine gender), on which was inscribed the words “Holiness (*qodesh* – sacred) to Yahweh.” It was tied around the high priest’s mitre with a blue cord (V.31).

This could be matched, in essence, by the perceptive Israelite who took up the invitation to prepare a ‘plate’ on the hem of their garment encircling their feet as stated in Num. 15:38-40 – “**Speak** unto the children of Israel, and **bid** them that they make them **fringes** in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the **fringe** of the borders a **ribband of blue**: And it shall be unto you for a **fringe**, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be **holy** unto your God.”

The terms “speak” and “bid” (*amar el* – speak towards) imply an appeal, not a command. Willingness and a desire to mimic the high priest was required. The word “fringe” used three times here is *tsŷytsith* – a tassel (and is the Feminine form of *tsŷyts*). This fringe or hem had a ribband of blue hung from it, but as with the blue cord used to tie the plate to the high priest’s mitre, the focus was not on it, but on the fringe (V.39 – “And it shall be unto you for a fringe, **that ye may look upon it**”). Holiness in the ‘head’ leads to holiness in walk. The principle

was clear. The holiness of the head of our High Priest must govern the path of the feet of his bride (Phil. 2:5) – “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Exodus 40 – The Tabernacle set up

The first day of the first month (Abib) of Israel’s second year out of Egypt began with 12 days of the most intense activity of their sojourn to that point. There were three concurrent events.

1. **1st day of the 1st month of the 2nd year** – Moses set up the Tabernacle and sanctified it (Ex. 40:1,17; Lev. 8:10-12). This was typical of the glorification of the saints – 1 Cor. 15:52 (all glorified together just as the Tabernacle was raised in one day after a lengthy period of preparation).
2. **The first 7 days of the 2nd year** – The consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood (Ex. 40:9-16; Lev. 8:10-12,33-36). This was typical of the anointing of the Millennial priesthood (Rev. 5:9-10; 20:4-6).
3. **The first 12 days of the 2nd year** – The princes of the 12 tribes brought identical offerings for the Tabernacle and its services – Num. 7 (note V.1,10). This was typical of the role of the saints as kings.

In Ps. 68, David saw the journey of the Ark from Sinai to Zion (Ps. 68:17) as typical of Christ and the saints coming “from Sinai to the sanctuary.” The materials for the Tabernacle and its furniture were brought out of Egypt to Sinai just as the responsible will soon be gathered out of ‘spiritual Egypt’ and taken to Sinai for judgement. As the completion of the Tabernacle and all its parts took nearly 12 months before Yahweh’s glory entered it on the day of its erection, so the strong inference is that the Judgement Seat will be about 12 months in duration.

Psalm 102 – The set time to favour Zion will come

The inspired superscription of Ps. 102 is revealing – “A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is **overwhelmed**, and poureth out his complaint before Yahweh” – The content of the psalm from verses 1 to 11 show how overwhelmed he was. What is the antidote to this situation which sometimes overtakes faithful servants of God?

The antidote is found in verses 12 to 28 – the permanence of Yahweh and the certainty of His promises. The trials of the present are best faced with the future firmly in mind. Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting (Ps. 90:2; 106:48) and His Kingdom will be established. There is a certainty about that. All our struggles and disappointments can be seen in their proper place when the focus is on the future – “Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come” (V.13).

1 Corinthians 10 – These things were our examples

Full ‘immersion’ in water saw Israel “baptized unto Moses” (1 Cor. 10:1-2). Walking between two walls of congealed water (Ps. 78:13) on damp sand, with the cloud above them (twice mentioned) saw them surrounded by water as those baptized into Christ must be. Hence, Israel in the wilderness became a type for all succeeding generations of those called out of ‘Egypt.’

V.6 – “Now these things were our examples” (*tupos* – type or model). Much can be learnt from Israel’s 40 year sojourn in the wilderness as Paul goes on to demonstrate.

In the modern world filled with multifarious temptations that press upon old and young through the most sophisticated technologies, the advice of verse 13 needs to be kept at the forefront of our minds – “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.” We all have the same problem, but a faithful God has provided a way of escape from temptation! Every room has a door; every gadget has a switch. Like Joseph, we can flee from temptation, if we choose to do so. But therein lies the problem – the desire to flee from lust is not inherent in

human nature. In fact, it is the opposite – Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:23. A conscious desire to do God's will is paramount (Ps. 40:8) – "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Our Lord shewed the way.

V.16-17 – "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not, a **sharing together** of the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not, a **sharing together** of the body of the Christ?" (Rotherham) – This is Paul's segway into the big issue in the ecclesia – the attendance at the feasts in the harlots' temple on Mt Corinthus by the Libertine brethren which was seriously impacting the conduct of the Memorial services in the ecclesia. The point he is making is that we are one body in Christ, represented by one loaf that is "broken" in order to be shared (11:24). How can members of that 'body' make themselves members of a harlot? (1 Cor. 6:15). This is why he later says in chapter 11:29 – "not discerning (*diakrinō* – to separate thoroughly) the Lord's body." There was no discrimination between a 'night club' and the ecclesia.

V.18-33 – Paul reverts to the brethren of chapter 6 who brazenly frequented the harlots' houses and sat in fellowship with the worshippers of idols (V.18-22). In so doing, they disdained the memorial feast and treated it "unworthily" (1 Cor. 11:29 – *anaxiōs* – irreverently), modelling their gluttonous behaviour in the memorial meeting on the feasts in the idol's temple.

Accordingly, they did not separate the Lord's body (the ecclesia) from the world that they had allegedly left behind (1 Cor. 11:29). 'Egypt' was as much in them as it was tragically in Israel (V.5-10) our example (in the type).

There is a simple touchstone for the brethren of Christ – "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**" If in every aspect of life that desiterata is kept in mind, there is a much better chance that such evils as Paul is dealing with can be avoided.

February 27

Leviticus 1 – The offerings of God

There were six altar offerings – sin, trespass, burnt, peace, meal and drink, but this is not the order in which they are presented in Leviticus. Why would that be the case?

Lev. 1 is about the burnt offering and Lev. 2 concerns the meal offering that always had to be offered in conjunction with a burnt offering. Yahweh was providing the principles that govern service to Him for all generations, whether under the Law or not. Significantly, sin and trespass come next, followed by the peace offering (more on that later).

Burnt offerings spoke of dedication to the service of God. They also included the element of **Atonement** (V.4), an essential where human beings are involved. The specific order of the offering being placed on the altar – head first; the fat around the vital organs, and then the inwards and legs (V.8-9) spoke eloquently of the way Yahweh works – mental, moral, physical (see Elpis Israel pages 30,44,53,194, etc.). This order was revealed in the six days of Creation in Genesis 1 – Day 1 = light (understanding of truth); Day 2 = separation between things above and below; Day 3 = fruit from the physical separation of earth (Israel) from sea (nations). The same pattern follows in days 4,5 and 6. God wants our mind first and foremost. We need to understand truth and be motivated by it. He next requires our desires and willingness to adopt His moral standards; then He will accept our service (washed as it was in water = the Word – V.9; Eph. 5:26). The only thing He did not want was the skin of the offering (Lev. 7:8). Yahweh is not interested in externals. He does not respect 'faces' or appearance (1 Pet. 1:17).

The first clean animal listed as a possible burnt offering is the bullock. Few Israelites owned a bullock. If you did, it was your prized possession. You would not easily surrender it because it

was in many ways your livelihood. That is why it is first in the list. This was the equivalent of the poor widow's two mites at the other end of the scale (Luke 21:4 – "all the living she had"). By bringing along your bullock and cutting its throat after placing your hand on its head, you were saying unequivocally that you were giving your whole life and being in service to God.

However, while the decision to offer the animal required abnormal willingness and commitment, the actual physical act of leading it to the altar was relatively easy. Once selected, the animal was roped and led along to the priest. That is why you also had to bring along the meal offering of Lev. 2, which significantly comes next.

Leviticus 2 – The essential meal offering – Matching performance with profession

The **meal offering** (the KJV translation "meat" is the Hebrew word *minchah* – to apportion, that is, bestow; a donation) is an acknowledgement offering. It required a much greater effort to prepare than simply leading along an animal that grew by itself in the field. An offering of fine flour required ploughing in cold and wet winter weather; casting the seed by hand into the ploughed earth; covering it with the foot to save it from the birds; patiently waiting for rain and sunshine to produce growth; sleepless nights to protect the new growth from predators (Mark 4:26-29); patience till harvest time in hot and sweaty conditions; harvesting with a scythe; collection into sheaves; transport to a hill top; threshing the grain from the head; winnowing by throwing the chaff into the wind; collection and sifting of the grain; grinding of the grain and sifting out the fine flour, not to mention its preparation with frankincense (prayer), oil (the Word) and salt (wholesome sound principle). This was a process requiring many months of laborious work in sometimes difficult conditions. It sounds like life spent in diligent service in the Truth! Yahweh was telling His people that if they chose to dedicate their life to Him, they must be sincere in their intentions to follow through on that promise. This was the key message that was given to the younger generation in the wilderness who would enter the Land (Num. 15:2-13). God is not mocked – Profession must be matched by performance.

Psalm 103 – The mercy of Yahweh is from everlasting to everlasting

V.1- **"A Psalm of David.** Bless Yahweh, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name" – Much encouragement for weak, but earnest mortals, is found in this psalm – forgiveness of sins not the least. However, there is an important warning in V.7 – "He made known his **ways** unto Moses, his **acts** unto the children of Israel." This is an allusion to Ex. 34:8-11 where Moses, having acknowledged Israel's hard-heartedness in the wake of the golden calf scandal, is told by Yahweh that he (Moses) while sharing a close personal relationship with Him (having been shown His 'ways' – Ex. 34:5-7), the situation would be quite different for his people Israel. They would be shown '**acts'** ("marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth" – Ex. 34:10) because that was what they thought would motivate them to higher things. However, miracles, signs and wonders do not convert men for the Kingdom. This is the clear teaching of 2 Pet. 1:16-21. They may grab attention and impress men for a short time, but they do not build faith or change character. Only the "sure word of teaching" can do that. Israel in the wilderness were not disposed to listen and obey, like Christ's generation they sought miraculous signs, and didn't change their ways even then.

Yahweh shows mercy and builds righteousness into His people (V.17) by His Word "To such as keep his covenant, and to those that **remember his commandments to do them**" (V.18). This is because they know that they are being prepared to be the angels of the future Age who like the angels of the present are called upon to "Bless Yahweh, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that **do his commandments**, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (V.20). Hearkening to the Word is indispensable in that worthy pursuit.

1 Corinthians 11 – Keeping the ordinances

V.3 – “I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” – The Divine hierarchy of V.3 – God, Christ, man, woman, is dismissed by modern Humanistic thinking. In fact, God is placed last, if at all, by many people. Christ is acknowledged in the calendar, but not always as a dominant force in the lives of most people. Women seek to rise above men as Eve usurped the rightful position of Adam (1 Tim. 2:12), and many men meekly capitulate to the woman’s voice like Adam (Gen. 3:17) – “women rule over them” (Isa. 3:12).

In Corinth, some sisters sought the teaching role of the brethren. Some deliberately abandoned the common practice of women of that time by neglecting to wear a head covering in their gatherings. By so doing, they perhaps unconsciously, but publicly dishonoured their husband who sat beside them (“every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head,” i.e. her spiritual ‘head’, her husband (V.5), not to mention the one above him in the hierarchy!

Some have argued that Paul’s statement that a woman’s hair is given as a “covering” eliminates the need for an additional physical covering (V.15). The word for “covering” in V.15 is *peribolaion* – something thrown around one, that is, a mantle, veil (the only other occurrence of this word is in Heb. 1:12 where it is rendered “vesture”). This is a different word than is employed for the stipulation in verse 6 that a woman should be covered – *katakaluptō* – to cover wholly, that is, veil. The confusion arises from not carefully reading the context. In verse 14, Paul says that even nature declares that it is a shame for a man to have long hair, but not for a woman. That is what he means in verse 15. Her hair is really like a garment of glory. The whole point of wearing a head covering is to hide her ‘glory’ like Rebekah of old (Gen. 24:65).

The disrespect that the ecclesia was showing towards the memorial service is next addressed by the Apostle in verses 17 to 34. That is why he uses the word translated “unworthily” in the KJV. As previously noted, it is a reference to disrespect or irreverence; i.e. a dishonouring of God and Christ. There are seven things Paul counsels the Corinthians to reflect upon and adopt when they came together for the memorial service. These were:

1. **V.24** – Ensure the occasion is a “remembrance” (*anamnēsis* – a remembering, recollection) of Christ’s sufferings and sacrifice, not an opportunity for displaying self-interest at the expense of others (the antithesis of his sacrifice).
2. **V.25** – To remember that Christ’s sacrifice was critical “to confirm the covenant made unto the fathers” (now called the “new covenant” because it was ratified by blood long after the Mosaic Covenant – Ex. 24); see Rom. 15:8. Without the confirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant there was no hope for anyone (Gal. 3:25-29).
3. **V.26** – They must recognize that at every partaking of bread and wine they “shew the Lord’s death till he come.” The Greek word for “shew” is *kataggellō* – to announce, declare, promulgate, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish. In other words, there is a public proclamation of the death of Christ. How was the crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts consistent with the gluttonous behaviour of the Corinthians at the memorial service?
4. **V.27** – They should be aware that such disrespect and irreverence at that time was tantamount to crucifying Christ afresh (Heb. 6:6).
5. **V.28** – In sharp contrast to their “revelling and banqueting’s,” this was to be a time of quiet reflection on whether their life in any way matched the selfless and sacrificial model they had come to remember. Self-examination is not easy for the natural man, but it is an indispensable practice for the spiritual.
6. **V.29** – Irreverence and disrespect for the sanctity of the memorial service reveals a fundamental problem – the absence of the concept of the separation of the ecclesial

body. Whether one leaves out the word “Lord’s”, or retains it, makes little difference. Paul’s reference is to the ‘body’ of Christ, the ecclesia. Some in Corinth treated the memorial gatherings like the feasts held in the idol’s temple on Mt Corinthus. Accordingly, they were weak, sickly and spiritually dead (sleeping) – V.30.

7. **V.31-32** – True and honest self-examination will invariably discover some weakness or failure that needs correction. If a decision is made to seek forgiveness and implement improvements in performance, then the individual has stood in judgement on himself. That obviates the need for the weakness/failure to be raised at the Judgement Seat and possibly lead to rejection.

In conclusion, the Apostle directs his readers to “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:4), when he counsels – “Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another” (V.33).

February 28

Leviticus 3 – Laws for peace offerings

While reading through the Book of Leviticus the phrase “sweet savour” will be encountered 17 times (today 3 times in Lev. 3:5,16; 4:31). The phrase “sweet savour” first occurs in Gen. 8:21 where the two words *nîychôach rîyach* appear together. This first occurrence in Gen. 8:21 of the two words used together provides, in the context, the key to its meaning.

The meaning of the words

“sweet” – *nîychôach* – Strong # H5207 – From H5117; properly restful, that is, pleasant; abstractly delight. This word occurs 43 times in the O.T. In forty-two of those it is found in tandem with *rîyach* (only once does it stand alone in Lev. 26:31, where it is rendered “sweet odours”).

“savour” – *rîyach* – Strong #7381 – From H7306; odor (as if blown). BDB – scent, fragrance, aroma, odour. There are 58 occurrences of this word in the O.T., 42 of those in tandem with *nîychôach*.

No rest for the Creator

The Antediluvian apostasy had grieved the Creator “at his heart” (Gen. 6:6), because “every imagination of the thoughts of his (i.e. man’s) heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5). These two verses see the first use of the word “heart” (*leb* – 598 occs.) in the O.T. The next two occurrences are in Gen. 8:21 (another obvious link). Yahweh had no rest and there was no pleasant savour for Him as He wrestled with almost universal wickedness (Gen. 6:3 – “my spirit shall not always **strive** with man”). This is the lot of the parents of a disobedient child (Prov. 17:21,25) – there is no rest and no sweetness.

A literal translation of these words would be “a fragrance of rest,” i.e. a pleasant period of rest from contention. When men walk in harmony with Yahweh and offer to Him ‘burnt’ and ‘peace’ offerings (so to speak), He has rest from frustration and anger – “God judgeth (i.e. chooses) the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day” (Ps. 7:11), hence, “Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). Yahweh preserved Noah and his family from the judgements that fell in the Flood.

The peace offering

Lev. 3 provides stipulations for the peace offering which spoke of the desire of the offeror to have fellowship with his God. It was the only offering which the offeror could partake of himself (that is laid out in Lev. 7:11-18). Hence, he shared a fellowship meal with his God. It was also

the only offering that could be made with **leaven** (Lev. 7:13) in conjunction with the thanksgiving offering (the most important of the three forms – the others being vow and freewill). This was because the need to seek fellowship with God was due to sin and **corruption** that had severed that fellowship. The offeror was acknowledging that he was the cause of the breach and was giving thanks for its repair through the grace of God.

The repeated requirement for every animal offered as a peace offering is “the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.” The priests were to burn the fat on the daily burnt offering that was constantly burning on the altar. This spoke of the continual dedication (burnt offering) of man’s innermost feelings and sentiments (the fat of the vital organs). If we want fellowship with our God it must come from the inner man (Eph. 3:16; 2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 7:22).

The other repeated requirement was “he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” In placing his hand upon the head of the animal before cutting its throat meant in essence that the offeror gave his own life in his quest for fellowship with God. Hence, the fat which represented his ‘real self’ was of necessity placed on the continual burnt offering to be wholly consumed by fire. This is what Yahweh sought from all faithful and willing Israelites.

Leviticus 4 – Laws for the sin offering

This chapter deals with the sacrifices concerning sins of ignorance, and provided for individuals, priests, rulers and the congregation as a whole. In each case the animal’s fat was treated in exactly the same way as the peace offerings of Lev. 3. However, because the offerings were for sin, the bodies of the **male** animals were burnt without the camp **if** their blood was related to the incense altar, vail and Most Holy Place – “And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before Yahweh, even before the vail.” This is picked up by the Apostle in Heb. 13:10-13 in relation to the sacrifice of Christ “without the camp.”

However, where a sin offering was a kid of the goats or a lamb whose blood was only related to the altar of burnt offering, it had to be a **female** – “And if he bring a lamb for a sin offering, he shall bring it a **female** without blemish” (Lev. 4:32). Its blood was poured out at the base of the brazen altar – “the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar” (i.e. its blood was not related to the Most Holy). In this way the Law presaged the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God (the antitype of the male lamb sacrificed in the Garden of Eden – Gen. 3:21) who was yet to come and do what the Law could not do, and that was give men eternal life. This is why Abel offered female lambs in Gen. 4:4 (see comments on Gen. 4). This is also why the bodies of sin offerings whose blood was related to the Most Holy (the arena of immortality) were burnt outside the camp. Eternal life could not come by law. Only the sacrifice of Christ could accomplish that.

Psalm 104 – The manifold works of God

V.1 – “Bless Yahweh, O my soul. O Yahweh my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty” – This psalm celebrates the wisdom and power of the Creator who made all things and sustains them every day providing for every part of His creation animate and inanimate. There are two things selected for notice in this psalm among many.

V.27-28 – “These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their **meat in due season**. That thou givest them they gather: thou **openest thine hand**, they are filled with good” – Christ draws upon these and similar words in Ps. 145:15-16 to deliver a warning

to the final generation that will see his return (Matt. 24:45) – “Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them **meat in due season?**” His fear was that one-time faithful servants (stewards) would tire of an apparent delay and fall victim to present worldly temptations (Matt. 24:48-49) – “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to **smite** his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken...” To smite with a fist requires the closing of the hand. Only an open hand can dispense food in due season. Selfish interests and drunkenness lead to denial of the sustenance that stewards should deliver to the needy as Yahweh does to His creation.

V.34-35 – “My meditation of him shall be **sweet**: I will be glad in Yahweh. **Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth**, and let the wicked be no more.” This passage refers to the “sweet” and “bitter” experiences of life. It is similarly expressed in Ps. 119:103-104 – “How **sweet** are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I **hate** every false way.”

Both Ezekiel and John went through figurative experiences related to impending Divine judgements (Ezek. 2&3; Rev. 10:10). Invited to eat the scroll of judgement, they both found it to be sweet to their taste, but bitter in their being. This is the experience of all who meditate with purpose on God’s Word. There is agreement (sweet) with the mind and purpose of Yahweh, but almost immediately a recognition that bitterness will follow the sweetness. We can agree with our God, but executing His commands is often a bitter experience because it is contrary to the way of the flesh. Similarly, for Ezekiel and John and those they represented for the future work of judgement, although we wholeheartedly agree with His judgements, the execution of them will not be a pleasant experience. The Levites who stood beside Moses in Ex. 32 went through that experience. They agreed with Yahweh, but were required to slay their own guilty brethren (Ex. 32:27). That is not easy, nor is everyday life in the truth.

1 Corinthians 12 – Proper use of the Spirit gifts

V.1 – “Now concerning” – *de peri*. This phrase is the way marker as Paul progressively answers a series of questions put to him by the ecclesia at Corinth. The subject turns to spirit gifts that had become a problem in the ecclesia through their misuse.

Not all nine spirit gifts had the same glamour in their use. This caused a degree of trouble among the ‘gifted’. The important lesson was that not all aspects of ecclesial work are the same and our challenge is to recognize where our ‘gifts’ (not spirit gifts in our time) can best be used for the edification and development of the ecclesia. This was Paul’s argument in Rom. 12:4-8 which he outlines here as well in verses 12 to 21 using the various parts of the body.

His following words about the greater attention we give to the “uncomely” parts of the body are an important exhortation to both those who regarded themselves as unimportant because they did not receive the ‘flashier’ gifts, and to those who did who may have looked upon the less ‘gifted’ with a degree of disdain. “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.” However, it is not enough just to recognize the value of the less prominent members of the body, there must be empathy and sharing of love and concern – “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

1 Corinthians 13 – The greatest of these is love

V.1 – “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love (*agapē*), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” – Without *agape* love (a sacrificial love of the will – this is a cerebral love, not emotionally driven), those who took pride in the flashier gifts were hollow drawers of attention to themselves (V.1). Similarly, teachers and geniuses, and those with deep faith and generosity were nothing without *agape* (V.2). What then are the qualities of this kind of indispensable love?

There are 15 qualities of *agape* listed, and fully 10 of them are negatives! Note the 8 bold words “not” below. Add to that the first quality – “suffering long” (that is acceptance of painful things through patience, is not active and positive action). Similarly, “bearing all things” is the quiet acceptance of ill-treatment or negative forces in our life. The word “endureth” is *hypomenō* – ‘to remain behind after others have gone’ is a positive action. So 10 negative and 5 positive qualities put a different perspective on the ‘love’ that many evangelical ‘christians’ promote nowadays. Sacrifice of self-interest in order to be obedient to God, and manifest Christ in everyday life, is at the core of this love. It is the “not my will be done, but thine” approach.

V.4-7 (RV) – “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth **not**; love vaunteth **not** itself, is **not** puffed up, doth **not** behave itself unseemly, seeketh **not** its own, is **not** provoked, taketh **not** account of evil; rejoiceth **not** in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

V.8-12 – (Rotherham) “Love, at no time, faileth;—but, whether prophesyings, they shall be done away, whether tongues, they shall cease, whether gaining knowledge, it shall be done away” – Everything now is in “part” – *meros* – a part due or assigned to one; one of the constituent parts of a whole. As such we are not ‘mature’ (or fully grown) – “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child,” but the day of perfection and fulness will come – “But when that which is perfect (*teleios* – brought to its end, finished) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

V.13 – Gifts played their part, but three things excelled – faith, hope and love (*agape*). In immortality, faith and hope have no relevance, but the greatest of these – *agape* love will never cease to exist or lose its importance because it represented total commitment to Almighty God.

APPENDIX 1

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Five sections matching the Pentateuch

1. Psalms 1 to 41 - The First or Genesis Book - Man

Psalms 1 to 8 - Man and the Son of Man
Psalms 9 to 15 - The Man of the Earth
Psalms 16 to 41 - The Man Christ Jesus

2. Psalms 42 to 72 - The Second or Exodus Book - Israel

Psalms 42 to 49 - Concerning Israel's ruin
Psalms 50 to 60 - Concerning Israel's Redeemer
Psalms 61 to 72 - Concerning Israel's redemption

3. Psalms 73 to 89 - The Third or Leviticus Book - The Sanctuary

Psalms 73 to 83 - The Sanctuary in relation to man
Psalms 84 to 89 - The Sanctuary in relation to Yahweh

4. Psalms 90 to 106 - The Fourth or Numbers Book - Israel and the Nations of the Earth

Psalm 90 - The Rest. Lost and needed
Psalms 91 to 94 - Rest for the Earth desired
Psalms 95 to 100 - Rest for the Earth anticipated
Psalms 101 to 105 - Rest for the Earth celebrated
Psalm 106 - The Rest. How lost and valued

5. Psalms 107 to 150 - The Fifth or Deuteronomy Book - God's Word the Only Good

Psalms 107 to 118 - Deliverance by the healing Word
Psalms 119 to 150 - Quickening and sustaining by the revealing Word

THE TITLES OF THE PSALMS

The following information has largely been collated from "The Titles of the Psalms" by J.W. Thirtle.

At the heading of many of the Psalms there is a superscription that contains information about the Psalm. Because the original manuscripts did not contain the numbering system that we have in our Bibles today, placement of these superscriptions was eventually made at the beginning of each Psalm. In many instances, part of these superscriptions properly belong at the end of the preceding Psalm as a subscription.

There are examples apart from the Psalms that illustrate this structure. In Habakkuk chapter 3 the pattern is established, with the superscription in verse 1, 'A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, upon Shigionoth', and the subscription in verse 19, 'To the chief singer on my stringed instruments' (the word for "singer" is the same as appears in the superscriptions to many Psalms - "musician"). In the superscription we have the class or type of writing (a prayer), the author (Habakkuk) and a special notation (Shigionoth). The subscription contains the musical direction (to the chief singer). This same pattern can also be seen in Hezekiah's Psalm of thanksgiving for his deliverance (cp. Isaiah 38:9,20).

In the Psalms there are no subscriptions noted, although both Habakkuk 3 and Isaiah 38 would indicate the expected pattern. Part of the superscriptions, in many Psalms, belong at the end of the previous Psalm. Consider the superscription to Psalm 9, 'To the Chief Musician upon Muth-Labben, A Psalm of David'. 'Muth-Labben' has the meaning 'Death of the Champion', but looking through Psalm 9, there is no particular relevance in this description. However, these words, as the subscription to Psalm 8, add to the setting of this Psalm, speaking as it does of David's victory over Goliath. Hence the words at the heading to Psalm 9 'To the Chief Musician upon Muth-Labben' more correctly belong to the subscription to Psalm 8 and the heading to Psalm 9 should only read 'A Psalm of David'.

The table below shows which part of the superscription to particular Psalms properly belongs to the subscription of the preceding Psalm. One way to highlight this in your Bible is to colour or box in the subscription portion belonging to the previous Psalm.

Superscription to Psalm	Musical Title	Should be:
Ps.4	"To the chief Musician on Neginoth"	Subscription to Ps.3
Ps.5	"To the chief Musician on Nehiloth"	Subscription to Ps.4
Ps.6	"To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith"	Subscription to Ps.5
Ps.8	"To the chief Musician upon Gittith"	Subscription to Ps.7
Ps.9	"To the chief Musician upon Muth-Labben"	Subscription to Ps.8
Ps.11	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.10
Ps.12	"To the chief Musician upon Sheminith"	Subscription to Ps.11
Ps.13	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.12
Ps.14	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.13
Ps.18	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.17
Ps.19	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.18
Ps.20	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.19
Ps.21	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.20
Ps.22	"To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar"	Subscription to Ps.21
Ps.31	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.30
Ps.36	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.35
Ps.39	"To the chief Musician even to Jeduthun"	Subscription to Ps.38
Ps.40	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.39
Ps.41	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.40
Ps.42	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.41
Ps.44	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.43
Ps.45	"To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim"	Subscription to Ps.44
Ps.46	"To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah upon Alamoth"	Subscription to Ps.45
Ps.47	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.46
Ps.49	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.48
Ps.51	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.50
Ps.52	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.51
Ps.53	"To the chief Musician upon Mahalath"	Subscription to Ps.52
Ps.54	"To the chief Musician upon Neginoth"	Subscription to Ps.53
Ps.55	"To the chief Musician upon Neginoth"	Subscription to Ps.54
Ps.56	"To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim"	Subscription to Ps.55
Ps.57	"To the chief Musician, Al-Taschith"	Subscription to Ps.56

Ps.58	"To the chief Musician, Al-Taschith"	Subscription to Ps.57
Ps.59	"To the chief Musician, Al-Taschith"	Subscription to Ps.58
Superscription to Psalm	Musical Title	Should be:
Ps.60	"To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth"	Subscription to Ps.59
Ps.61	"To the chief Musician upon Neginah"	Subscription to Ps.60
Ps.62	"To the chief Musician to Jeduthun"	Subscription to Ps.61
Ps.64	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.63
Ps.65	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.64
Ps.66	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.65
Ps.67	"To the chief Musician on Neginoth"	Subscription to Ps.66
Ps.68	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.67
Ps.69	"To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim"	Subscription to Ps.68
Ps.70	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.69
Ps.75	"To the chief Musician, Al-Taschith"	Subscription to Ps.74
Ps.76	"To the chief Musician upon Neginoth"	Subscription to Ps.75
Ps.77	"To the chief Musician to Jeduthun"	Subscription to Ps.76
Ps.80	"To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth"	Subscription to Ps.79
Ps.81	"To the chief Musician upon Gittith"	Subscription to Ps.80
Ps.84	"To the chief Musician upon Gittith"	Subscription to Ps.83
Ps.85	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.84
Ps.88	"A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth"	Subscription to Ps.87
Ps.109	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.108
Ps.139	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.138
Ps.140	"To the chief Musician"	Subscription to Ps.139

THE SUPERSCRIPTIONS TO THE PSALMS

1. Superscriptions in General

The Psalm headings do not indicate musical distinctions but emphasise the character of the psalm or the moral and spiritual intent of the author. The different Hebrew words at the heading of the psalm are an indication of the dominant note or frame of mind with which the psalm is to be considered.

2. Psalm (Hebrew - 'mizmor')

Occurs in the superscription to 56 psalms - Psalm 3,4,5,6,8,9,12,13,15,19,20,21,22,23,24,29,30, 31,38,39,40,41,47,48,49,50,51,62,63,64,65,66,67,68,73,75,76,77,79,80,82,83,84,85,87,92,98,100, 101,108,109,110,139,140,141,143.

The word in the Hebrew is from the verb 'zamor' which has the meaning 'to cut or prune'. It is rendered in the following ways: 'to prune' (2); 'be pruned' (1); 'give praise' (2); 'sing' (12); 'sing forth' (1); 'sing praises' (29); 'sing psalms' (2).

The purpose of pruning is to produce fruit (John 15:2) and hence the purpose of these psalms is to cut away the thinking of the flesh, so that the reader's mind is in tune with God's and may be able to develop fruits to His honour (cp. Gal.5:16-24). The thoughts behind this word, and in the contemplation of these psalms, is expressed in Col.3:5,16.

3. Song (Hebrew - 'shir')

Occurs in the superscriptions of 15 psalms (and 15 songs of degrees) as follows - Psalms 18,30, 45,46,48,65,66,67,68,75,76,83,87,92,108.

The Hebrew word is used of the song of Miriam (Ex.15:1,21) and of the song of Deborah and Barak (Judges 5:1-3). These psalms are a spontaneous response of joy in the appreciation of God's bountifulness (cp. use of the word in Psalms 13:6; 59:16; 68:32; 89:1).

4. Songs of Degrees (Hebrew - 'shir ma'alah')

Occurs in the superscriptions of Psalms 120 to 134. The Hebrew word for 'degrees' has been translated 'to go up, stairs, steps and ascent'. In the first instance, these psalms were assembled by Hezekiah to bring to remembrance the 15 years that Yahweh added to his life. He says in Isa.38:20, after his recovery, "we will sing my songs, to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of Yahweh". Hezekiah wrote 10 of these psalms which corresponds to the sign he was given that he would recover - the 10 degrees by which the shadow of the sun went backwards on the dial of Ahaz (cp. 2 Kings 20:9-11). As Hezekiah said in Isa.38:22, this sign was given to him to indicate that he would evermore "go up to the house of Yahweh".

Israel used these same psalms to prepare themselves as they ascended up to Jerusalem from year to year to keep the feasts of Yahweh. They can also elevate our minds as we look to the time when we shall ascend the hill of Zion, with songs of joy upon our lips for all the bountifulness of our God.

5. Maschil

Occurs in the superscriptions to Psalms 32,42,44,45,52,53,54,55,74,78,88,89,142.

The Hebrew is from a verb 'to be prudent and intelligent' and has been translated as follows - consider, instruct, prosper, prudent, teach, understanding, skilful, have good success, wisdom, wisely, guide wittingly.

The purpose of these psalms was to teach God's wisdom and they would appear to have been used as **public prayers** for instruction and education in Godly principles.

6. Michtam

Occurs in the superscriptions to Psalms 16,56,57,58,59,60.

The Hebrew is uncertain but Strong's suggests it means 'an engraving' from a verb meaning 'to carve or engrave, to inscribe indelibly'. Jeremiah uses the word in Jer.2:22 "though thou wash thee with nitre and take much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked ('michtam') before me...." The idea behind the word suggests that the reader should indelibly inscribe the principles of the psalm upon the mind. These psalms are, therefore, set opposite to the Maschil psalms and are intended to be for **personal meditation**.

7. Prayer (Hebrew - 'tiphillah')

Occurs in the superscriptions to Psalms 17,86,90,102,142.

The Hebrew means 'to make intercession, supplication' and is the word used in Habakkuk's psalm in chp.3:1. The power and personal commitment in prayer is seen in the life of Daniel and the use of the word in Daniel 9:3,17,21. See also the yearnings of David in Ps.17:1. Each of these psalms begin with an anguished cry for deliverance or an expression of dependence upon God, but all of them end on a note of thanksgiving, hope and confidence in the power of God.

8. Praise

(Hebrew: 'T'hillah') - Superscription to Ps.145

(Hebrew: 'Shiggaion') - Superscription to Ps.7

(Hebrew: 'Shigionoth') - Superscription to Hab.3

The Hebrew 'T'Hillah' comes from a word meaning 'to be clear, to shine' and hence refers to the clear-mindedness of the individual as his countenance shone with praise to God.

The Hebrew 'Shiggaion' (and 'Shigionoth') comes from a word meaning 'to extol' or 'to call, cry out, sing aloud'. Both of these sets of meaning find expression in the two psalms as cries of personal distress are voiced (Ps.7:2) as well as the expression of confidence in God and praise for His promises (Hab.3:16-19).

9. Psalms for Special Purposes

Ps.38,70	'to bring to remembrance'
Ps.100	'of thanksgiving'
Ps.102	'of the afflicted when overwhelmed'
Ps.92	'for the sabbath'
Ps.111-113, 115-117, 146-150	'Hallelujah Psalms'

THE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE PSALMS

1. To the Chief Musician

The Hebrew is 'Belonging to the Chief Musician', in the sense of it belonging to his repertoire of music. There are 55 psalms bearing this subscription and most of them bear the name of David. The word "Chief Musician" is from a verb meaning 'to lead in music' and is used in the sense of superintending, cp. 1 Chron.15:21 (excel); 1 Chron.23:4 and 2 Chron.34:12 (set forward); 2 Chron.2:2,18 and 34:12 (overseers). The Chief Musician was, therefore, the conductor and director of the Temple singers and musicians. In this capacity he would have trained the singers, led the music and directed the forms of worship. The psalms thus noted in his repertoire had an important and recognised place in the official worship of the Temple.

David, whose name appears most frequently over these psalms, instituted them into the divine worship. He set over the worship Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, superintended the process of instruction and instituted a procedure for temple worship (cp. 1 Chron.25:1-7). There were twelve brethren in each of the twenty four courses, instructed 'in the songs of Yahweh' (1 Chron.25:8-31). David also established twenty four courses of priests to work in the temple service (1 Chron.24:1-19; cp. Zacharias in Luke 1:5). These arrangements of David for both worship and service became the pattern for future generations (cp. 2 Chron.29:25-26; 35:15; Ezra 3:10-11 - note the contrast in Amos 6:5). This procedure established by David is to be the foundation for worship and service in the age to come when worship and service in the

Temple at Jerusalem will be on an international basis. It is the foundation of the symbol in the Apocalypse styled the 'twenty four elders'. In each instance, this reference to the twenty four elders is associated with worship and praise (cp. Rev.4:4,10; 5:8,14; 11:16-17; 19:4-5).

In the psalms there is sometimes added an extra word which informs us that some of the psalms were noted for special occasions during the year, when they would convey a timely lesson. If no such direction was given, it was at the spiritual discretion of the Chief Musician to arrange the appropriate psalm for the occasion, and this meant that he not only had to have a clear and precise knowledge of the spiritual context of the psalm, but also the clear-sighted wisdom to use the psalm in its proper way.

2. Shoshannim - Subscription to Psalms 44 and 68

The Hebrew means 'lilies' and indicates spring time when the flowers burst forth - a time of beauty and of new life, the time of Passover, the great spring festival when Israel celebrated deliverance from Egypt and the formation of their nation from the bondage of Egypt. The spirit of 'Shoshannim' is expressed in the Song of Solomon 2:10-13, "...the winter is past....the flowers appear on the earth...".

Psalm 44 speaks of Yahweh's deliverance 'in the times of old' (V.1) and laments Israel's present affliction, ending with a plea for Yahweh to again arise and redeem His people. Psalm 68 is based on the exodus from Egypt and looks forward to that greater exodus under Jesus Christ, both of leading 'captivity captive' (V.18) and the consummation in the Kingdom.

3. Gittith – Subscription to Psalms 7,80,83

The Hebrew means 'winepresses' and indicates the end of the harvest season ('Shoshannim' was the beginning) when, in Autumn, the vintage is pressed, the final fruits gathered in and the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated (cp. Deut.16:13-14).

The harvesting and processing of the vintage is often used as a symbol of the judgement to come upon the nations (Isa.63:1-4; Rev.14:18-20). The fruit of this harvest is fit only for the treading in judgement of the sons of God.

The Feast of Tabernacles, however, was also a time of rejoicing, when thankfulness was expressed to Yahweh for the season's bounty and for His provision and protection (Lev.23:41-43; Ps.121:3-5).

Hence, in Psalms 7 and 83, we have expression of judgements as the Psalmist desires the time when 'Yahweh shall judge the people' (7:8). In Psalm 80 we have a plea for Yahweh to remember His vine and once again deliver it; "look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine" (Ps.80:14).

Together 'Shoshannim' and 'Gittith', flowers and fruit, are taken up in the scriptures to encompass the whole range of Yahweh's care, deliverance and bounty towards His people (cp. Hosea 14:4-7). Even the hem of the high priest's garment reflected these two ideas - 'bells' (the lily is a bell-shaped flower) and 'pomegranates' (fruit); Exodus 28:33. The two grand pillars in Solomon's Temple also embraced these symbols (1 Kings 7:20-22).

4. Shushan Eduth, Shoshannim Eduth – Subscriptions to Psalms 59,79

'Shushan' is the singular form of 'Shoshannim' and 'eduth' means 'testimony'. The Hebrew of these expressions is thus 'lily (or lilies) of testimony'. Being associated with Shoshannim indicates that it was sung in spring. 'Eduth' is frequently connected to the Law of Moses, given at Sinai (cp. Ex.31:18 - 'testimony').

Edersheim in "The Temple - Its Ministry and Services" suggests that Pentecost commemorated the giving of the law. He writes: "The Feast of Unleavened Bread may be said not to have quite passed until fifty days after its commencement, when it merged in that of Pentecost, or 'of Weeks'. According to unanimous Jewish tradition, which was universally received at the time of Christ, the day of Pentecost was the anniversary of the giving of the law on Mt Sinai which the Feast of Weeks was intended to commemorate. Thus as the dedication of the harvest, commencing with the presentation of the first omer on the Passover, was completed in the thank-offering of the two wave loaves at Pentecost, so the memorial of Israel's deliverance, approximately terminated in that of the giving of the law."

Hence, 'Shoshannim-Eduth' was representative of psalms commemorating the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. Shoshannim was used because Pentecost was considered to constitute the conclusion of Passover, and Eduth was used because Pentecost commemorated the giving of the law.

Although the Feast of Weeks spoke of the time of firstfruits, when Israel entered the land (Lev.23:9-21), Psalms 59 and 79 seem to have been selected to contrast this happy time with a note of solemnity, not to take for granted Yahweh's blessings. They both speak of the time when Gentile nations are in the ascendancy (Ps.59:8,13; 79:1,6) and, therefore, the solemn implication is for Yahweh to continue the blessings of the land.

5. Muth-Labben – Subscription to Psalm 8

As the AV stands, the Hebrew words mean 'dying for the son'. However, a strong case has been made that the word 'Labben' should read 'Labbeyn' which means 'of the champion'. The subscription therefore indicates that the Psalm was used to commemorate 'the death of the champion', namely Goliath the Philistine (cp. 1 Sam.17:4,23).

David saw the death of Goliath as the time of victory over all sin and death, when 'all things' would be 'under his feet' (Ps.8:6) and God would be all and in all (1 Cor.15:25-28).

6. Mahalath – Subscription to Psalm 52

Thirtle shows that the Hebrew should read 'M'holoth' which means 'dancings'. The word occurs in 1 Sam.18:6, where the women of Israel danced upon David's return from defeating the Philistines. Being a psalm, as the superscription notes, which was inspired by the machinations of Doeg the Edomite, David saw in Doeg the epitome of wickedness and predicts his speedy destruction. By applying this psalm to times of dancing and rejoicing, David was pointing forward to the time when all the King's enemies would be removed and dancing would prevail.

7. Mahalath Leannoth – Subscription to Psalm 87

In the Hebrew 'Leannoth' means 'shoutings' and being associated with Mahalath indicates an intensity of rejoicing, expressed in 'dancings and shoutings'. When the ark was brought to Jerusalem by David there was such an intensity of joy (2 Sam.6:5,14,15). In Psalm 87, we have the extension of this rejoicing, when those whose hearts and lives have been centred in Zion, will finally be brought to the 'city of God'.

8. Aijeleth Shahar – Subscription to Psalm 21

The Hebrew means 'the hind of the dawn' and is a phrase representing something beautiful and graceful. A hind represents someone who is beloved (Prov.5:19) whilst the dawn is indicative of the ushering in of the Kingdom (2 Sam.23:3-4; Mal.4:2).

The Psalm would have been used at the coronation of kings and points forward to the greatest coronation when God's beloved son will assume his rightful position as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

9. **Jonath-elem-rechokim – Subscription to Psalm 55**

The Hebrew means 'The Dove of Distant Terebinths'. In verses 6 and 7 of the psalm we have the idea of this subscription expressed. The psalm depicts the occasion of David's flight from Absalom when he was betrayed by Ahithophel (vv.12-14) and had to cast his 'burden upon Yahweh' (v.22). The Terebinth was a tree that grew in comparative solitude.

10. **Al-Taschith – Subscription to Psalms 56,57,58,74**

The Hebrew means 'destroy not' and the phrase occurs in Deut.9:26 where Moses pleaded with God not to destroy the people for worshipping the golden calf. These psalms were appropriate for times when the nation might be overwhelmed by enormous troubles as a result of their waywardness. Their plea would be 'destroy not'.

11. a) **Alamoth – Subscription to Psalm 45**

b) Sheminith – Subscription to Psalms 5,11

c) Jeduthun – Subscription to Psalms 38,61,76

- a) The Hebrew 'Alamoth' means 'maidens' and indicates that Psalm 45 was reserved for the female singers (cp. Ezra 2:65). This is particularly appropriate in this Psalm, speaking as it does of the marriage of Christ and his ecclesia (Eph.5:21-33).
- b) The Hebrew 'Sheminith' means 'eighth' and also occurs in 1 Chron.15:21. There seems to be a contrast here to verse 20 where certain skilled men were appointed 'with psalteries on (or 'over') Alamoth (or 'maidens'). It is assumed that Sheminith refers to male singers in contrast to the female singers (Alamoth). This would account for the meaning of the word, for circumcision was performed on the eighth day.
- c) Jeduthun was a leader of a third section of singers, who led his brethren in thanks and praise to Yahweh (1 Chron.25:3). Psalm 38 is a psalm of praise in that he remembers that God did make haste to help him. Psalm 61 is a psalm of thanks for deliverance from the enemy and Psalm 76 is a psalm of praise for the victory over the enemies of Zion.

12. **Nehiloth - Subscription to Psalm 4**

Thirtle, supported by the Septuagint translation, suggests that the Hebrew word is 'N'haloth' meaning 'inheritances' or 'possessions'. Psalm 4 was thus chosen to commemorate the inheritance of the land and that Yahweh would finally cause His people to dwell there in safety (v.8).

13. **Neginoth - Subscription to Psalms 3,5,53,54,60,66,75, and Habakkuk 3**

The Hebrew means 'stringed instruments' indicating that the psalm was to be accompanied with stringed instruments. The use of harps and similar instruments would have made the psalm very melodious. We note the calming effect that such an instrument had upon Saul in 1 Sam.16:22-23.

In Eph.5:19-20 Paul encourages us to make melody in our hearts to the Lord. The Greek word means 'to pluck the strings' and when our minds and hearts are in tune with Godly principles, there is indeed an unseen, but melodious, sound made before the God of heaven.

As we read these, and all the psalms, may it be true of us that, with David we may say "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise" (Ps.57:7).

APPENDIX 2

Genesis 14 – Armageddon in Genesis

Bible Marking Notes

Genesis 14 is the first place in Scripture where Armageddon is presented in type in astonishing detail. The record covers the period from Armageddon to the full establishment of the Kingdom when Christ will share a fellowship meal with his saints in the House of Prayer for all nations.

Genesis 14

¹ And it came to pass in the days of ²Amraphel king of ³Shinar, ⁴Arioch king of ⁵Ellasar, ⁶Chedorlaomer king of ⁷Elam, and ⁸Tidal king of ⁹nations;



Prefigures Nebuchadnezzar's Image

The 4 kings of the northern confederacy typify the 4 world empires of Dan. 2 which are to be formed into one massive image empire in the latter days. This can only be complete when Gog is victorious in the Land for Israel was part of all four empires. The head (thinking power) of the image will be "Babylon the great"; hence **Amraphel** is first named, although he does not lead the actual invasion.

² That these made war with ¹⁰Bera king of ¹¹Sodom, and with ¹²Birsha king of ¹³Gomorrah, ¹⁴Shinab king of ¹⁵Admah, and ¹⁶Shemeber king of ¹⁷Zeboiim, and the king of ¹⁸Bela, which is ¹⁹Zoar.

The five kings of the south typify the corrupt latter day Tarshish powers who oppose Gog's invasion but are defeated and humiliated in the Land. It is noteworthy that 1st World War British Empire posters listed Australia, Canada, India and New Zealand as allies – a total of 5 'kings'.

³ All these were joined together in ²⁰the vale of Siddim, which is ²¹the salt sea.

⁴ Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the ²²thirteenth year they rebelled.

⁵ And in the ²³fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the ²⁴Rephaims in ²⁵Ashteroth Karnaim, and the ²⁶Zuzims in Ham, and the ²⁷Emims in ²⁸Shaveh Kiriathaim,

⁶ And the ²⁹Horites in their mount Seir, unto ³⁰Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

⁷ And they returned, and came to ³¹Enmishpat, which is ³²Kadesh, and smote all ³³the country of the Amalekites, and also the ³⁴Amorites, that dwelt in ³⁵Hazezon-tamar.

Armageddon

Hebrew derivation - 3 words - aremah/ gai/dan or dun
"A heap of sheaves" - *ārēmâh* - heap, pile; (Strong adds - specifically a sheaf). This word is rendered "bringing in sheaves" (Neh. 13:15); "heap of corn" (Ruth 3:7); etc. Root - *āram* - to heap up, pile, be heaped up. Another word rendered "sheaves" is *āmar* - to bind sheaves; to gather.

"Valley" - *gai* - valley, a steep valley, narrow gorge.

"For judgement" - *dīyn/dūn* - to judge, contend, plead.

⁸ ¹ And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they ²joined battle with them in ³the vale of Siddim;

⁹ With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; ⁴four kings with five.

Invasion of the Land by a northern confederacy

¹ Cp. Dan. 2:44. Nebuchadnezzar's image is prefigured here in the 4 kings who form this confederacy.

² "One that speaks of secrets" (Hitchcock); "Keeper of the gods" (Smith); "Powerful people" (Youngs). After defeating Arioch he united Babylonia under one rule, and made Babylon his capital.

³ "Two rivers" (BDB, Smith, Fausset). Hebrew form of the Akkadian name Semiramis (wife of Nimrod) – the first "mother of harlots".

⁴ "Venerable" (Smith); "Lion-like" (BDB, Easton). Also said to mean "Servant of the moon god".

⁵ "Revolt from God" (Hitchcock). Larsa in Chaldea.

⁶ "Handful of sheaves" (BDB, Smith). Thought to mean "Servant of Lagomer" (an Elamite goddess) in the original language.

⁷ "Eternity" (BDB, Smith) – related to *olam*. East of Babylon.

⁸ "Fear" or "reverence" (Ges.); "Great son" (BDB, Smith).

⁹ *goyim* – nations; i.e. local tribes east of Tigris and north of Elam.

¹⁰ "Son of evil" (BDB, Easton, Smith).

¹¹ "Burning". Named for its ultimate fate.

¹² "With iniquity" (BDB); "Son of godlessness" (Smith).

¹³ "Submersion" (BDB, Smith, Easton).

¹⁴ "Splendour of the father" (BDB); "A father has turned" (Strong).

¹⁵ "Earthy", "Red earth".

¹⁶ "Lofty flight" (BDB); "Soaring on high" (Easton).

¹⁷ "Gazelles".

¹⁸ "To devour at a gulp" (Strong, Easton); "Destruction" (BDB, Smith).

¹⁹ "Little" – Cp. Gen. 19:20-22.

²⁰ "Field" or "plain" (BDB). Roth. – "the valley of the open fields".

²¹ i.e. when Moses wrote after the judgements.

²² The number of rebellion.

²³ 2 x 7 (covenant) = enforced covenant.

²⁴ "Giants". A race of giants like Og (Deut.3:11,13; Josh. 12:4) east of Jordan.

²⁵ "The horned Astartes" (Ges.).

²⁶ "Prominent" (Strong). Giants between Arnon and Jabbok – Deut. 2:20.

²⁷ "Terrors", "Terrible ones". Inhabitants of Moab – Deut. 2:10.

²⁸ "Plain of a double city". See Josh. 13:19; Deut. 3:13.

²⁹ "Cave dwellers" in Petra.

³⁰ "The terebinth (oak) or the Plain of Paran".

³¹ "Fountain of judgement" (Ges.).

³² "Sanctuary".

³³ i.e. the country later inhabited by the Amalekites, descendants of Esau – Gen. 36:12.

³⁴ "Highlanders", "hill-men". Inhabitants of Canaan.

³⁵ "Pruning (or dividing) of palm trees" (Easton) – the old name for Engedi – 2 Chron. 20:2.

The southern Confederacy defeated – Lot taken captive

¹ Roth. – "Thus then went forth".

² Roth. – "set themselves in array against them for the battle". Same word "battle" Zech. 14:2.

³ Roth. – "the valley of the open fields".

⁴ Total 9 = finality/judgement.

¹⁰ And the vale of Siddim was full of ⁵slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain.

¹¹ And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their ⁶victuals, and went their way.

¹² And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, ⁷who dwelt in Sodom, ⁸and his goods, and departed.

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¹³ And there came one that had ¹escaped, and told Abram the ²Hebrew; for he dwelt in the ³plain of ⁴Mamre the Amorite, brother of ⁵Eshcol, and brother of ⁶Aner: and these were ⁷confederate with Abram.

Abraham spent 20 years in Hebron. During this time his household grew to include 318 born in the camp. Added to this a number of Gentiles were converted by the preaching of the "gospel" (Gal. 3:8) God had earlier revealed to him.

¹⁴ And when Abram heard that his ⁸brother was taken captive, he ⁹armed his ¹⁰trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto ¹¹Dan.

¹⁵ And he ¹²divided ¹³himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto ¹⁴Hobah, which is on the ¹⁵left hand of ¹⁶Damascus.

¹⁶ And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, ¹⁷and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

¹⁷ And the king of Sodom ¹went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of ²Shaveh, which is ³the king's dale.

¹⁸ And ⁴Melchizedek king of ⁵Salem brought forth ⁶bread and wine: and he was the priest of ⁷the most high ⁸God.

David later emulated Melchizedek and acted as a king and priest distributing bread and wine to both Jew and Gentile, and male and female when bringing the Ark to Zion to be placed in "the tabernacle of David" – 2 Sam. 6:14-19.

¹⁹ And ⁹he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, ¹⁰possessor of ¹¹heaven and earth:

²⁰ And blessed be the most high God, which hath

¹²delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he ¹³gave him tithes of all.

Acts 3:25-26 shows Abraham's blessing is to have the work of Christ become truly effective in turning believers from iniquity.

²¹ And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, ¹Give me the ²persons, and take the goods to thyself.

²² And Abram said to the king of Sodom, ³I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

²³ That I will not take from a ⁴thread even to a ⁵shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing ⁶that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

²⁴ ⁷Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the ⁸men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; ⁹let them take their portion.

Abbreviations

Roth. – J.B. Rotherham's Emphasised Bible
Ygs. Lit. – Young's Literal Translation
Strong – Strong's Concordance of the Bible
Young – Young's Concordance
Ges. – Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

⁵beer chemar– pit of bitumen. Root *chamar* – to glow with redness; boil up. Translated "red", "troubled", "foul" (Job 16:16).

⁶okel – food.

⁷Lit. "and he was living in". A further step from Gen.13:12.

⁸Contrast Gen. 19:12-16 – God left them behind.

Abram's company rescues Lot from the invader

¹palet – a refugee. Used Jud. 12:4-5; Isa. 45:20. Type – Zech. 14:2.

²"Crosser-over" (to be on the opposite side by transition). Descendent of Eber – Gen. 10:21,25.

³elon – oak.

⁴"Strength" or "fatness".

⁵"Cluster of grapes".

⁶"Boy".

⁷baalim berith – owners of a covenant. Roth. – "having a covenant".

Gentiles converted by preaching the Gospel – Gal. 3:8.

⁸ach – relative, kinsman.

⁹ruq – empty out; pour forth. Roth. – "drew forth".

¹⁰chaniyik – initiated, practised. i.e. in matters of the Truth.

¹¹"Judgement".

¹²chalaq – separate by lot. See use Job 38:24 ("parted").

¹³Operated as one body. Cp. "he and his servants" - a type of Christ.

¹⁴"Hiding place". 80 kms (50 miles) north of Damascus.

¹⁵i.e. north (to one facing east). Signifies judgement – Ps. 75:6-8.

¹⁶"Sack of blood". Another indicator of judgement.

¹⁷Lot given opportunity to forsake Sodom, but goods prevailed in his family.

Abram blessed by Melchizedek

¹Thus acknowledging Abram as his deliverer in humility.

²"Level plain"; root to level; equalise; resemble, hence, to be made like. Cp. Heb. 7:3 – "made like unto the son of God".

³Lit. "the valley of the king"; namely, Melchizedek. Note – 2 Sam. 18:18; 1 Kings 1:33-34; Neh. 2:14-15.

⁴"King of righteousness" - Heb. 7:2. 11 occs. in Scripture (2 O.T., 9 N.T. all in Hebrews). 11 = incompleteness. Shadow inferior to substance.

⁵"Peace". Jerusalem's ("Vision of peace") name in the Kingdom – Ps. 76:2.

⁶The tokens of the New (Abrahamic) Covenant – Matt. 26:26-28.

⁷elyon – elevation, lofty, supreme. Root *halah* – to ascend.

⁸El – strength, mighty. Title of Deity as prime mover of Creation.

⁹Melchizedek greater than Abram – Heb. 7:7. See Acts 3:25-26.

¹⁰qanah – found, create, thus to possess, own. See use Ps. 139:13; Prov. 8:22.

¹¹Armageddon will ultimately unite heaven and earth (Matt. 6:10) by revealing its true possessor.

¹²magan – to shield, encompass with. Its root is *magen* used Gen. 15:1 "shield".

¹³See Heb. 7:4-10.

The king of Sodom repudiated by Abram

¹King sin is only interested in ruling the bodies of men.

²nephesh – a breathing creature.

³To make an oath – Ex. 6:8; Deut. 32:40 (cp. context V.32,41-44,50).

⁴chuwt – to sew; a string. i.e. a tie for a girl's hair.

⁵serowk – a thong (as tied), and *na'alah* – a sandal tongue. Thus repudiates the smallest property of both male and female.

⁶Knew king of Sodom did not acknowledge El Elyon as "possessor of heaven and earth".

⁷i.e. recover out of pocket expenses.

⁸enosh – weak mortal men.

⁹Principle – 1 Tim. 5:18. But they may not have done so – 1 Cor. 9:4, 6-12.

BDB – Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon

Easton – Easton's Bible Dictionary

Fausset – Fausset's Bible Dictionary

Smith – Smith's Bible Dictionary

APPENDIX 3**Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come – 1861 pages 176-178**

In the following extract from the article Bro. Thomas makes the following points:

1. **The sign of the Son of man in Matt. 24:30 is the equivalent of Rev. 1:7 and speaks of the same time.**
2. **That the days of Noah has reference to both the times prior to AD 70 and to the days preceding Christ's Second Advent.**
3. **That the judgements of the Olivet Prophecy are not confined to the Jews of AD 70 but also involve the nations of the latter days.**
4. **That Luke 21:25 refers to events preceding Christ's Second Advent which will find many unprepared and catch them as a snare.**

And elsewhere, he says, the sign of the Son of man in heaven shall appear; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Does not our Lord in another gospel utter the words quoted at the commencement of this paper? "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed*". This was realized in the time preceding the overthrow of Judah's commonwealth, and will doubtless be characteristic of that other day of the Son of man when he shall come in power. Does he not set forth to us the whole subject of his rejection, and absence, and return, in the parable of the nobleman, who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return? "His citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." His servants were left to occupy in his absence. Among these, when he returns, he distributes the tokens of his approval or displeasure; but what becomes of the citizens who hated him, and would not submit to his reign? But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." Such are the words of Jesus. And still further, he speaks of days of vengeance on the Jews, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But are approaching judgments confined to them? Nay, far from it. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and over the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them *for fear*, and *for looking after* those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." True, the word to the disciples is, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." That which fills the world with forebodings, inspires with stronger hopes those who have hearkened to the Lord's voice. But even to these, he says "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*" How awful are these words! Are any of those quoted from the Old Testament more pregnant with solemn warning and admonition? But how is this? How can men's hearts be failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, and yet this terrible day come as a snare on all them that dwell on the earth ? Ah, there is no contradiction here. The premonitory calamities will awaken men's fears, and cause their hearts to fail, just as many hearts did fail, amid the convulsions of a few years ago. But we have evidence all around us of how soon men's fears may be allayed; how a temporary lull soothes all to deeper slumber; slumber, not disturbed, but made still more fatally sweet, by dreams of safety, and prosperity, and peace, and plenty, and all that the heart of man desires to form a paradise in this evil state. It will be at such a time, that as a snare the day of the Lord will all at once enclose them, in the grasp of those terrific judgments from which there is no escape. As Paul witnesses, "For yourselves

know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child: and they shall not escape."

Want of space compels me to pass over all intermediate testimonies, that we may listen for a moment to the beloved disciple, the prophet of Patmos, and to those wondrous revelations he was privileged to receive and to communicate. What have we as one of the earliest anticipations in his prophecy? "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and *all kindreds of the earth* shall wail because of him." Visions of judgment, one after another, are beheld by the Apostle. Seals are opened, trumpets are sounded, vials of wrath are poured out. War, famine, pestilence, persecution of the saints; earthquakes, judgments upon natural objects, judgments upon commerce, and judgments upon all the sources of moral influence by which men are affected; a withholding of the light which had been previously vouchsafed, the letting loose of one horde after another of infernal enemies and tormentors, till men shall seek death and not find it,—shall desire to die while death flees from them: these are some of the woes pronounced in this book, upon the world of the ungodly. The final crisis of human iniquity is portrayed, and the principles marked out, of which this crisis will be the full development. Then we are told of worse judgments still. The vials of God's wrath are to be poured out; poured upon the earth, and the sea, and the rivers and fountains of waters; on the sun, on the seat of the beast, on the great river, then last of all, upon the air. "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices and thunders, and lightnings: and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Then we are told of a plague of hail, every stone about the weight of a talent. We have further details of instruction as to the ecclesiastical apostacy, and the war against Deity by the imperial power of the earth. We have the doom of Babylon, with all its luxuries, delicacies, and refinements, and heaven rejoicing at her fall. A mighty angel taking up a stone like a millstone, and casting it into the sea, says, "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, *and shall he found no more at all*. And the voices of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, *shall be heard no more at all in thee*; and no craftsman of whatsoever craft he be, *shall be found any more in thee*; and the sound of a millstone *shall be heard no more at all in thee*; and the light of a candle *shall shine no more at all in thee*; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride *shall be heard no more at all in thee*: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were *all nations* deceived." But previously to the fall of mystic Babylon, the heaven opens; a white horse comes forth, and «he that sat upon him, called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. He is clothed in a vesture dipped in blood. He has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. The armies which were in the heaven follow him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of the mouth of the glorious One goes a sharp sword with which to smite the nations: he is to rule them with a rod of iron: he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gather together to make war against him that sits on the horse, and against his army. The beast and the false prophet are taken, and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and their followers are slain with the sword of him that sits upon the horse.

Such is the end of the course of this AION, or "times of the Gentiles!" Its commerce and its pleasures, its politics and its religion, its philanthropy and its misanthropy, its hypocrisy and its blasphemy, its morality and its open wickedness, all find their termination here.