

A WORD IN ITS SEASON

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THE GIVING LOVE AND GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS

John 3: 35; 4: 4-14, 22-24

1 Chronicles 29: 10-14

MAB Where we were together for the Lord's supper this morning, reference was made to the giving love and grace of our Lord Jesus. And there was reference made to this scripture in Chronicles where David says, "of that which is from thy hand have we given thee". The desire of God our Father is to give, and as we see in John's gospel, "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand". It is a very affecting thing that there was One here, in His greatness and the glory of His Person, God in His own Person, and in manhood the Father was able to commit all into His hands because He loves Him. It has been said that it sets the tone for the whole of John's gospel that there was a Man here that was for the pleasure of the Father, and He was securing worshippers on behalf of the Father and His love, that there should be a return. The return has not been manufactured or tainted by anything that is of ourselves; it has been brought about by the giving grace of divine Persons and by divine love known.

We see this in the way that He deals with the woman at the well. He deals with the moral matter with great skill and delicacy, and He would bring out what was not satisfying her, to bring her to realise the greatness of the gift that was available; and all she had to do was ask. Such is the disposition of God that, where there is a movement of heart, a true movement of heart to Him in asking, then there is this attitude of giving. Such are the gifts; we see one here; one of the things given into the hands of the Son, the gift of the Spirit. Later on, we get the gift of life eternal (chap 17: 2), and we get the liberty of sonship as well, chap 8: 35,36. These things have been given into the hands of the Son.

But then we might touch too on what we can give back, which is a great privilege to the believer, great joy to the believer's heart, that there is something that we can give back to divine Persons. Do you think we could get some encouragement from that?

CAMcK We certainly can. A few weeks ago, a brother was reflecting on this verse 35 of chapter 3, that it was the fruit of John's contemplations of the Lord Jesus. He arrived at that; all these years he had been thinking about it. I appreciate what you say about it setting the tone; we get the gift, what God has given, in verse 16, the Son Himself: it says of God "he gave his only-begotten Son". It begins with

Him, and then culminates in what we can return willingly to Him.

MAB Yes, that verse was in my mind too, John 3: 16. It is a great gospel verse: we see God's attitude. A brother gave us a gospel a few weeks ago where he touched on Romans 8, "He who, yea, has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all", v 32. That is the greatness of the heart of God in giving. Again, the verse in Corinthians was before me, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that for your sakes he, being rich, became poor, in order that ye by *his* poverty might be enriched", 2 Cor 8: 9.

JL Sometimes things are given expression to in a time of need, but that would not be the reason in verse 35. Have you some suggestion about what underlies it there?

MAB Well, there might be a suggestion of need being met in John 3: 16; where there is the suggestion of perishing, there is life eternal coming in there in relation to the love of God in giving the Son. But here it is really in relation to the whole of the Father's heart being known and revealed as we get later on in the book. We get the ascending "to my Father and your Father", chap 20: 17. It is not anything to do with need, but relationships established and sonship enjoyed.

JL You can well understand need exists in regard of men, but never so between the Father and the Son, and I understand the word here conveys the settled disposition of God and that would be reflected in His love for the Son in committing all things into His hand; it would indicate the capability of the One who is able to handle everything on the Father's behalf.

MAB That is helpful; there was a life before the Father's eye for these thirty years of secret history that fully pleased the Father. Not that there was in any way any suggestion that He might not be capable of all these things committed to Him, but He was fully proved in that time, do you think?

JL We sang a line of a hymn that impressed me again today concerning the Son, who secures,

The universe for God. (Hymn 171)

God's delight as Father would be to commit everything into the hands of the One who can administer everything in blessing for the whole universe in view of a returning answer to God; man and whatever other creatures may be involved.

MAB Very helpful. We might have a reading quoting hymns, but maybe that is what flows out of the service of God and rightly so. We also sang 416, which affected me in relation to the Father,

Causing praise Thine ear to fill.
Wider still Thy blessing floweth,
Every family named of Thee.

That links on with what you are suggesting, that the whole universe will be responsive to God the Father because of what He has done.

JL We give because of what God has given to us; that is the basis on which the hymns have been written; it is what has been imparted to souls; it is God that has generated these responses that we share.

AJL We would recognise the source of the gifts on account of where they have come from. It speaks about "Every good gift and perfect gift" coming down from the Father of lights, Jas 1: 17. We would know where the gifts come from as recognising that they come from Him.

MAB That is helpful; I think that is an important matter to get into our souls that they come from the Father, One who is supreme in the revelation and who cares for us, One who loves us. Even what we have providentially is given of God and the believer holds it in stewardship, but how much more precious are thoughts of divine grace and love which are imparted to us spiritually.

AJL We are assured of these gifts. There was another gift offered, indeed several, "All these things ... if, falling down, thou wilt do me homage" (Matt 4: 9): that was not assured. I was thinking if the gift is from God, we know it is going to come and it is going to be good. I was thinking too of that scripture that the Father knows how to give good gifts, Matt 7: 11. Satan could not offer anything in the way of good gifts.

MAB So God gives according to His nature: "God is love" 1 John 4: 8. Everything that is given is righteous, is holy, as according to Himself and everything is given on the basis of the finished work of Christ.

AJL Not to go on at length quoting hymns but No 1 says,
Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
E'en heav'n itself no richer knows
Than the Redeemer's blood.

JL What is the importance of the feelings of the Father being put

into the *hand* of the Son; “given all things to be in his hand”?

MAB I would like to get your thought but it could suggest various things to us. The hand is what serves, but there is too the thought of power being there. We get the hands of the Lord Jesus later in the gospel where He washes the feet of the disciples (John 13), a service of love.

JL Those points are very good. I wondered about two additional ones; one would involve His capability of His administering everything, and the other would be that as given into His hand it is in view of dispensing; that is a blessed feature of what God has given: it is freely made available in view of the blessing of the objects of His love through Christ.

MAB Yes, these things could not be given into any other hand; “given all things to be in his hand”. There would be perfect proportionality in the dispensing of the Lord Jesus. If we look at the examples when He caused persons to sit down and caused food to be given, caused the fragments to be gathered up again (Matt 14), there is perfect administration in that in the hands of the Son.

AJL Would it show God's wisdom in what He gives. If He gave everybody everything, they might become overwhelmed by it, or become occupied with the gifts, or become overwhelmed by being unable to respond, but does He prove His wisdom by what He gives to each?

MAB Yes, I think so. Do you think that is why in suggesting to this woman, He says to her, “If thou knewest the gift of God”? - He does not say which gift - “and who it is that says to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him”, and again it does not say what she would have asked, but simply that she would have received, she would have received living water. So in that sense where there is a desire of heart on the part of the believer and an expression of that desire for divine blessing; divine Persons know what to give in that moment.

CAMcK I was thinking in relation to this as a reflection of John in chapter 14 how Philip says to Him, “Shew us the Father”, and the Lord says to him, “Am I so long a time with you, and thou hast not known me, Philip?”, v 8-9. But John at the beginning of his gospel recognises that the Son was so pleasing to the Father that He had committed “all things to be in his hand”, and He was so perfectly able to give in such a way that it was the Father that would be known as the source of everything.

MAB And so you can understand the Lord Jesus saying, “He that has seen me has seen the Father”, because everything that He did was representative of Him. In fact, He says “For the Father loves the Son and shews him all things which he himself does”, John 5: 20.

CAMcK I was thinking of Philipians 2. I am not sure if it is a similar thought, but I have often wondered about it, that God has “granted him a name that which is above every name” (v 9); it is the One who is worthy to bear that name; there is only One who is worthy and able to dispense these things.

MAB There is only one Man after the Father's heart, the One who is chosen, the Beloved. We are often affected by that, that there is One who could take up the matter of redemption and One into whose hands all things could be committed by the Father; it is very affecting.

JL Solomon is typical of the Beloved, and also of Christ exalted, and it says of him, “I will give thee riches and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall any after thee have the like”, 2 Chron 1: 12. I suppose Christ is the full answer to that; He has become enriched with every gift that is available for men; no other could ever serve such a role.

MAB That is very helpful; so He has “ascended up on high ... and has given gifts to men”, Eph 4: 8. In Ephesians we have “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ”, chap 1: 3. Because of His ascended position there is now available divine resource and blessing for us.

JL No doubt there was what was given to Christ when He came here as Man to dispense in the way of blessing amongst men, but the fulness of things is especially connected with the exalted Christ consequent upon the accomplishment of all His work.

MAB That is very helpful, because the way John presents things is Jesus came by water and blood (1 John 5: 6); His death was required for all these precious gifts that are to be got the gain of by souls such as you and me. In John 17 He speaks about those that were given, “They were thine, and thou gavest them me”, v 6. It was the disciples at that time but it does also bring us into these matters as He also mentions, 1 John 1: 3.

JL It surely does through marvellous grace.

MAB The simple example here in John 4 is a very precious thing when we think about the One who was interacting with this woman, a Samaritan woman who was looked down upon by the Jews, the Jews having no intercourse with Samaritans, but here we find Jesus the Son, “he must needs pass through Samaria”. We can understand the wonderful way that the Father committed that day into His hand, for the blessing of this woman. He emphasises the preciousness and depth of the Giver and the gift. Not only do we have divine Persons who are ready and desirous of giving blessing, but the immensity of the gifts that are available to us! For instance, it speaks in the scriptures of “his unspeakable free gift”, 2 Cor 9: 15.

CAMcK It does not exactly define what that is. It would involve all these things; the gift of the Spirit, forgiveness of our sins, sonship, all would be included in it.

MAB Yes, I have heard it mentioned like that, the gift of the Spirit, the gift of the Son, both would be unspeakable free gifts in grace.

JL One thing we can rejoice in on account of that is that these gifts are never recalled; that is a feature of divine giving, as is our calling; God never goes back on these things.

MAB And that hymn;

Shines on us now without recall,
And lasts while Jesus lives. (Hymn 26)

That is a wonderful matter. In Hebrews it stresses the matter that things are never recalled; “he has perfected in perpetuity the sanctified” (Heb 10: 14); perpetuity being that it shall never, never end!

AJL Are there any gifts that we need to pay for?

MAB There is sacrifice required, but I am not sure that is related to a gift because a gift is generally voluntarily given. But there is in Christianity a wealth which we need to sacrifice for, perhaps by time or energy, to acquire, but I am not sure you could speak about it as payment. What do you think?

AJL No, I think that is good. I was just wondering when you quoted that scripture about the unspeakable free gift, the gifts are not said to be given conditionally. But I suppose God would look for a response, and that necessitates our giving.

MAB I think the Lord Jesus suggests that in this chapter when He

speaks to the woman about worship. He has already made her aware that there is something else available to her as opposed to what she has been struggling with, another source of satisfaction. We can understand that the gift of the Spirit is absolutely essential to everything that we enjoy in Christianity. We cannot have a relationship with an ascended Head in heaven without the Spirit being the vital well of water springing up into eternal life and making good and real in our hearts everything that God has in mind for us. Then there is the matter of worship, as the Lord says, “they who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”, that is that the Spirit is involved in our worship of divine Persons. But do you think that flows out of the appreciation of the gifts that we have received?

AJL Yes; giving has been in God's mind from the beginning. It is even in the account of the fall of man because the fruit of the trees was given to man, and do we need to give to God first before giving to man?

MAB That is helpful to see that; that would be the right order.

AJL For example, God gives dominion in the first chapter of Genesis (v 26), and then it speaks in the next verses as to the cattle and so on. Man is given everything in the first few chapters.

MAB I think what you say is right in relation to giving to God, and then giving to man. It would really flow out of a full heart Godward. A full heart Godward would result in a full heart manward. A dear local brother always reiterated that, that deliverance comes in thanksgiving, and praise comes in thanksgiving. I suppose that would be linked with being thankful for the gifts that we have received, being maintained in that attitude for everything we have. If it is worth anything it is from God and we can be thankful for that. It liberates the heart; it lifts it up to God.

CAMcK I like your thought that the Lord knew what she needed. She had had five husbands and she was not a satisfied person. He obviously, because of who He is, was able to discern that there was a deep longing with this woman. It must have been so, because she made such quick progress. He graciously goes on with her challenges about Jacob and so on, but He quickly gets right to the very thought of worship of the Father Himself. Only the Lord can discern what we are longing for.

MAB The Lord Jesus knows exactly what we need at any given point in our journey. Whether it is correction, adjustment, whatever it may be, He can bring it in. We can ask, and we do not necessarily need to know

specifically what we ask for, but we can rely on divine Persons to answer integrity of heart, a desire to receive. The preciousness of it, specifically marking John's gospel, is that the Lord Jesus was here showing who the Father was, “(and we have contemplated his glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth”, chap 1: 14. “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”. I often love to think of the conversations that John and Mary might have had prior to the writing of the gospel, Mary having been committed into the household of John, chap 19: 27. Mary “kept all these things in her heart” (Luke 2: 51); she saw and heard and witnessed things about the Lord Jesus that no one else would have seen, and she must have treasured them and would have spoken to John about these precious secrets.

CAMcK It says, “and even a sword shall go through thine own soul”, Luke 2: 35. It was a deep matter for her, and in her appreciation she would find someone in John she could converse with freely.

JL There is somewhat a double aspect to the giving here, is there? The Lord says, “the water which I shall give him”: such a person would never thirst forever, the need is fully met. Then He says, “but the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life”. That is wonderful excess and a responsive answer flowing out from the spirit of giving we see in the Lord Jesus, in keeping with your thought. The need is fully met but the excess of blessing in divine giving prompts such a return in fruitful answer.

MAB That is very helpful and stimulating too. When someone is filled with the Spirit of God, the consequence when the Spirit is being made way for is a springing up, and this excess you are speaking of. There is no result other than God gets His portion from full hearts.

JL Yes, very good, and it would bear on the nature of what is given by God as well. If it was merely to meet material needs, that would be one thing, but the gift of the Spirit is such a wonderful gift, and the gift of sonship and so on; these are wonderful gifts that necessarily must produce an answer in returning praise, do you think?

MAB Returning praise, and another thought that was in my mind in relation to this is that it is all on the ground of grace; there is nothing deserving. What we read locally on Thursday night is a bit in my mind; we are going through Deuteronomy. In chapter 8 Moses is taking the people through a summary of the wilderness journey, really about the

grace of God, but then in chapter 9 he brings in a severity and sobriety about their own wickedness and falling short of God's faithfulness. But at the end of the chapter and all through he brings out that God shows great grace and goes on with His people giving and giving and giving again, no matter the situation they find themselves in, and it is the same with us. We can rely on the grace of divine Persons.

JL That goes along with the thought of a free gift. We might ask what other kind of gift you can get! Essentially all gifts are free, but there is the additional thought that it is unconditional. You might get a conditional gift - if you do something then I will give to you - but the unconditional gift bears on the blessedness of grace in activity.

MAB So when we are speaking about gifts - although we are speaking about desire on the part of the believer, what we can also understand is that there are certain gifts which are conferred upon us quite apart from desire. For instance, as believing on the Lord Jesus Christ we are sons of God, Gal 3: 26.

JL "The free gift of righteousness", Rom 5: 17.

AJL Condition is part of Satan's gift in Matthew 4.

CAMcK In relation to that, the Lord quoted Deuteronomy to Satan showing that spirit of giving and grace from which I suppose we get the benefit.

MAB That quotation is one of the bases of the Father loving the Son and giving all things into His hand; it says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth", v 4. There was a Man, the only Man who was fully in accord with that scripture.

CAMcK A fountain of water is superior to a well. I saw a picture of Sychar's well; it did not go straight down; it was quite a complicated thing; it would be a difficult matter. The woman speaks about not having anything to draw with, but a fountain is so superior, a sense of what is freely flowing and fresh and unlimited as well.

MAB It is suggestive of these conditions, unending blessing and resource, "a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life". There are suggestions of water in the land in Deuteronomy; the water gushes forth, springs up (chap 8: 7); there is an energy to it and that is what the Spirit gives to the believer. In the flesh there is no spiritual energy rising up to give praise or response to God, but in the Spirit there is, spiritual

energy.

AJL Would a fountain be less subject to contamination?

MAB Yes, the wells got contaminated in the olden days.

AJL I just wondered if we might be apt to dip into things ourselves and get an impression but it might be contaminated as a result of our interpretation, but if it comes from the Spirit, from the fountain of water, it will not be in any way contaminated.

MAB It is always fresh, constantly fresh, “a fountain of water, springing up”, gives that impression. There is that freshness and vitality, and it would not be contaminated.

JL That would go along with the thought of living water. What do you understand by that, the end of verse 10?

MAB Is the Lord contrasting it with what the woman had been going to and drawing from in the well of water, which was used to address any natural thirst? But this living water is divine resource in relation to the living God and causes a person to live in relation to God. It is from an entirely different source. What is your thought?

JL Very helpful; it is worth pondering over, “springing up into eternal life”.

MAB And her question, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou the living water?”, helps every believer in relation to this question: do I have a desire for this water that can be freely given of God? If we think of her question we get to the conclusion that here is a Person who has all things in His hand. It is the answer to “The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand”, and hence He has the living water.

We may just touch on this matter of worship, in 1 Chronicles 29. King David through the scriptures is a type of the Lord Jesus, and a type of the believer too. Here we have him in doxology to Jehovah, and as we know, hymn No 3 is largely composed from these words, and what he says at the end of verse 14. He is really placing himself in his proper place before Jehovah, “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer willingly after this manner?”, and that is really like the fountain of water springing up into eternal life, that we should be able to offer willingly, “for all is of thee, and of that which is from thy hand have we given thee”. It is a great matter as we come to the service of God and enter into it; what emanates from hearts in response to divine

Persons is only what has been given to us of Themselves to start with. I think that maybe suggests what was said about paying for the gifts; they are all free but then what we can give back has accumulated.

AJL There is a similarity to the flask of ointment; that was given, but it was collected up first.

MAB Very helpful, the aspect of time, cost and sacrifice and giving all enter into that in the presentation of the flask and its contents to the Lord Jesus. And then the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, John 12: 3.

CAMcK She appreciated the value of that myrrh in collecting it. She appreciated the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. David here prepared according to all the power and his affection, gold and silver; this was not just natural; it was really David appreciating these attributes of God, glory and redemption and many other aspects, and therefore was able to accumulate them in view of giving them back to God.

MAB Take the example of a young person sitting down with the scriptures or a book of ministry and reading a page or a verse or a section of scripture or ministry; if there is a right heart, God will impart something in great grace as a gift, you might say as a reward, that can be brought into the service of God in praise and worship. That is really like someone preparing in their affection for the things of God.

JL While sacrifice enters into what belongs to Christianity, it would be true to say too that in giving to God what is due to Him in the way of response and worship I am in no way deprived. If you do that in relation to material things, if you give away something, you have that degree less in possession; how can you explain that in divine things?

MAB Often we say we do not lose what we have if we give it away in Christianity, but do you not think even more than that it grows brighter and larger? That is a wonderful thing in being completely different to how the world operates. We had that recently in relation to trading, we were enjoined to "Trade while I am coming" (Luke 19: 13), what is used is not lost but it is doubled.

JL Very good. The Lord conveyed that to His disciples, indicating to Peter that sacrifice would be involved and things would be left in relation, for example, to the fishing and the nets, and that there would be a superabundance of compensating giving from His hand, Mark 10: 29.

MAB You get that in one sense with the deep exercise of Job; at the end of his days he was blessed, when he came to things, right judgments were come to; obviously this could be applied spiritually.

CAMcK David begins in verse 5 of this section by saying, “And who is willing to offer to Jehovah this day?”. The footnote says, ‘Or “consecrate of what he possesses”’, footnote ‘b’. So that shows the level it is on. But it is a question of willingness; it is not ability or capacity or anything like that because we all have something.

MAB Yes; so it is the willing-hearted that get the blessing, but every believer in the Lord Jesus has something, some gift; the gift of righteousness is imparted to the believer, and we can give thanks for that and offer something back of appreciation that we have been made righteous, our sins have been forgiven.

CAMcK The thief on the cross, hours with Jesus, though he had been mocking him with his partner, at some point while on the cross, just a few hours, could say, “this man has done nothing amiss”, Luke 23: 41. He had that appreciation of Christ.

MAB We are not told what that meant to the Lord Jesus to hear that, but His response of, “To-day shalt thou be with me” (Luke 23: 43) is suggestive.

CAMcK What do you think about all these beautiful words that can only relate to God in verse 11 and so on? You referred to hymn No 3; do you have any other thought about it?

MAB No, just what has been penned by the Spirit through writers has been very helpful to consider, and what has been put into hymn No 3 is always affecting as we sing it, “Thine, Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the splendour, and the majesty”. It is all attributes and language used of Jehovah that is right and proper to the place that He has and the Person that He is. Again, we would be helped in these matters by these gifts that we receive to talk to divine Persons in the right way with reverence and ascribing to them the glory that is due. “Thine, Jehovah, is the kingdom, and thou art exalted as Head above all”; it is very beautiful language, and David had come to the conscious knowledge of this in his soul through his affection and his affliction.

JL It has been pointed out that Solomon largely seemed to learn by observation, and David largely by experience with God, and that seems

to add a certain character and richness to David's response in that account which, while he may not be figurative of the exalted position of Solomon, the response here from his heart was deeper and richer.

MAB Very helpful to point that out. Look at Psalm 51, for example; you see where he starts in the psalm and where he ends with burnt offerings. And that was because of deep moral experiences, failures; yes, he went through much with God, and that is the portion of believers to go through all of life's experiences with God. That contributes to what is precious in the soul of the believer and what can be brought out.

AJL Is that all in contrast to Judas; he wondered as to the ointment, 'Why this waste; it could have been given to the poor?'. I was thinking of that hymn,

And not alone the gift of life,
But His own self He gave me.
Nought that I have mine own I call
I hold it for the Giver; (Hymn 187).

MAB Yes, very helpful to see the contrast. Judas did not care for the Person; he had no appreciation for the Person of our Lord Jesus nor the pathway which He was going to undertake. The Lord Jesus says, "ye have the poor always with you", v 8. But Judas had the purse and had the love for what was in it; that was really what was driving him, and he finished by selling the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, such was his valuation. It is in complete contrast to the valuation the believer places on the gifts that have been freely given to him.

CAMcK Peter said, "Silver and gold I have not; but what I have, this give I to thee", Acts 3: 6.

MAB Very attractive. They were finding willing exponents there for the gifts that they had received.

CAMcK And they could give it, and that man could rise up and walk, and Peter himself was in no way disadvantaged; he was enriched.

MAB Exactly, he had another man he could walk with, he held him "walking, and leaping, and praising God", v 8.

CAMcK It comes from God's hand, "from thy hand have we given thee": what do you think about that in connection with all that has been given into the Lord's hand?

MAB It is an administration of love and goodness to David and he

recognises that. He must have recognised in his experience that God could have taken it all away from him and yet on the contrary God had given all to him, as the response here shows. David must have had a great appreciation of the goodness of God :“for all is of thee, and of that which is from thy hand have we given thee”. David recognised that all this wealth that had been accumulated was directly from God and, through grace, was being returned to Him.

Brechin

31st August 2025

List of initials:-

MA Brown, Bo'ness; AJ Laurie, Brechin; J Laurie, Brechin; CA McKay, Brechin

THE LORD JESUS AS PRIEST

Alastair J McKay

Hebrews 7: 23-26

Exodus 28: 1-21, 31, 32

Luke 22: 31, 32

It is my desire, brethren, and I look to the Lord to help, to continue to have the Person of our Lord Jesus before us. I think we had some help together in considering His greatness before God and from God's side in the reading, but my desire is that we might be attracted to Him as One who acts from our side towards God.

He is presented uniquely in the epistle to the Hebrews. There had been many priests, and the priest acted on behalf of the people in bringing them into the divine presence and offering for the sins of the people. These priests had to offer for their sins as well. Verse 24 says, "but he". I am struck by these references to the uniqueness and the greatness of Jesus because there was no man like Him. I want to appeal to all of us, but I want to appeal particularly to our young people at the moment because the enemy wants to place in your path things to distract you from Jesus. Now that is not only about the young people, just to be clear, because the enemy does that to all of us. I do not stand here before you, brethren, as immune from that, but I think it is something that the enemy is focused on right now, to distract us and to draw us away from the blessed Person of our Lord Jesus. The writer to this epistle says, "but he," - there is something special about this Man - "because of his continuing for ever, has the priesthood unchangeable". What a blessed, unique place our Lord Jesus has.

It says, "Whence also he is able to save completely those who approach by him to God". The greatness of God, dear friend, means that we cannot approach in our own merit. We need Christ; we need our Lord Jesus. We need the One who "has the priesthood unchangeable" if we are to approach God, and I trust there is a desire in every heart here to approach God, to come into the great presence of a divine God. It says, "he is able to save completely those who approach by him to God". Our approach into the divine presence must be by Him. It is not in my power; it is not in my strength; it is not in any human intelligence or wisdom; it is "by him". That is, the only basis that we have to approach God is "by him", by the One we spoke of in the reading, by the One who "has the priesthood unchangeable".

And what I really wanted to draw attention to is the end of verse 25, “always living to intercede for them”. Are we aware that we have One who is “always living to intercede”? He intercedes for us. He intercedes for you, dear young one. Think of that! Think of the attractiveness of every soul that belongs to Christ, and He is interceding on behalf of every one, and it says that He is “always living”. Beloved, this is something that is happening now; it is happening today. He is interceding on your behalf and on my behalf before God. How wonderful that is, because without that intercession, without the service of this great High Priest, I cannot come into the presence of God Himself, but with it I have One who is interceding on my behalf.

I want to refer to Exodus. I have read a lot of detail as to the priest's garments and I cannot enter into it. I cannot speak of the detail, but this section begins with the suggestion of Aaron and his sons, who were to serve God. Now, Aaron is a type of our Lord Jesus as Priest, as High Priest, but who are the sons? Dear friends, they refer to you and me. God has in mind that you and I might take up this service, and that is my objective, dear friends, in this brief time together, that we might be drawn to be with Christ in what He is undertaking in the presence of God, and find our part in Him.

As to the garments that are spoken of here, the first thing is gold. It says, “they ... shall make the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, scarlet and twined byssus, of artistic work”. There was divine glory in what we are speaking of. The One who is worthy to bear the ephod, the One who is worthy to wear this priestly garment is none less than Christ Himself, none less than the One whom we spoke of in the reading who has undertaken everything for God, the One who fills everything for God and makes God's mind known. That Man is ready to intercede on my behalf and on your behalf. The ephod, the official priestly garment, He bears it; He is worthy of it.

I want to draw attention to the fact that we are carried in. “And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on the one stone, and the six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth”. Dear friends, you and I are set together in relation to Christ's intercessory service before God; we are there. Think of those names engraved on the onyx stones “according to their birth”. What does John's gospel say? “Who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God”, John 1: 13. Dear friends, that is what sets us together.

We are born of God and on these onyx stones we are set together in relation to what is common among us. You and I, we are all set on these stones, and the Lord Jesus carries us in and He carries us in on His shoulders. That speaks of strength; that speaks of power. I have often been struck that in Isaiah it says, “the government shall be upon his shoulder” (chap 9: 6), one shoulder! But when it comes to carrying the saints, beloved, both shoulders! When it comes to carrying the saints, Christ is occupied with carrying us in on both shoulders. He is utterly committed to that, dear friends, utterly committed to intercede on behalf of all of us together. How blessed that is! What a blessed service!

It says, “According to the work of an engraver in stone, as the engravings of a seal, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel; surrounded by enclosures of gold”. I think that is a blessed touch, “enclosures of gold”. There is what is worked out, and what is established morally in the heart of every saint and in the heart of every believer that answers to the gold itself and is protective, secure; you and I secure, dear friends, on those onyx stones and carried into the presence of God.

And then it says, “and Aaron shall bear their names before Jehovah upon his two shoulders for a memorial”, and then we have “the breastplate of judgment of artistic work, like the work of the ephod thou shalt make it”. And here we have the stones, four rows of stones, and the stones are different. Dear friend, what you are and what I am in our own individual links with Christ and our own experience with Him, how I have proved Him, how I have come to know Him, carried in on the breastplate.

It says later in verse 29, “And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment on his heart”. Beloved, think of that! Think of the stones! Think of the saints, you and I, being carried in by Christ, carried in “on his heart”, His affections engaged in relation to you and me. Stones like these are seen later on; there are stones seen in the foundations of the holy city. Think of what God has in mind as to the place that you will have and I will have and we currently have in relation to His thoughts, and the Lord Jesus carries us in on His heart. How blessed that is! What a glorious Man is before us, dear friends. This Man is doing this; He is “always living to intercede”, to carry us in and carry us in that we might approach God. We are carried in by Him; we are carried in by the One who in His uniqueness is none less than the Son of God.

We read of “the cloak of the ephod” and that reference, “it shall not rend”. I am affected by the fact that the cloak of the ephod, as I understand it, was underneath the ephod and, if we can use that expression, covered what rested on the perfect humanity of Christ, the glory of that Man. It was blue, heavenly blue, the Man out of heaven is suggested by that cloak - “it shall not rend”. What Christ typically is dressed in relating to what He undertakes in view of His intercessory service “shall not rend”. It will not fail, beloved. It does not fail because of Him. I was thinking a little bit about this. If we can picture the tabernacle and we can picture what it would have looked like in the desert, you would have come into the court and to reach the holy place, what is the first thing you would see? The first thing you would see is the altar of burnt-offering, and it says of the fire there, “it shall never go out”, Lev 6: 13. It is because of Him that things do not fail. It is because of Him, because of the perfection and the glory of that offering, that things are maintained for God; not because of anything in me, not because of anything in you, but because of everything in Christ. “It shall not rend”.

I want to move on to Luke because this is a picture of the Lord's intercessory service. It says in verse 31, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon”. I have been wondering about the repetition of his name, and I think maybe there is a touch of the stone, a touch of the name on the onyx stone and a touch of the name on the breastplate; both names are there. He says, “/ have besought for thee”. Think of that! Think of the Lord Jesus, dear young person, beseeching for you. He is doing this, and He is doing it today, and He is doing it in relation to your circumstances. Many of our young people are facing *real* exercise, *real* challenge. As one who is getting a bit older now, I wonder how much I appreciate that, but there are real challenges of real exercise that are being faced by so many of our young brethren. Beloved, there is a Man who has besought for you. There is a Man who is active in interceding for you, coming into your circumstance, carrying you into the presence of God, ordering things in your life. Think of the very practical circumstances of life, and the Lord Jesus is beseeching for you and for me; He is doing that. I am sure that many in this room could say that He has done that 'for me', proved it, been conscious of it! It says, “but / have besought for thee that thy faith fail not”. Peter was a man of faith but he failed, as do we all.

But then comes the exercise, “when once thou hast been restored, confirm thy brethren”. I want to leave this exercise with us,

dear brethren. Are we prepared to confirm our brethren? If you look at the note to the word “restored”, Mr Darby says, “confirm” is *sterizo*, as ‘establish’: establish the brethren. You might ask how you could do that. How could I establish the brethren? How could I confirm my brethren? What does the Lord say to Peter? He says to him that he should feed His lambs, John 21: 15. He says to him that he should shepherd His sheep, John 21: 16. He says to him that he should feed His sheep, John 21: 17. Beloved, every one of us can have a part in that. Every one of us can be active in what is confirming our brethren. If you go out to a weeknight meeting, you are confirming your brethren. I have commented on this before, but I will say it again, never underestimate what it means to your brethren to see you at a meeting. Do not underestimate it! It means a huge amount; it means a lot to Christ, but it means a lot to your brethren, and it is confirming and it is establishing to the brethren. What does Peter do in his epistle? He writes to those “of the dispersion”, 1 Pet 1: 1. He reaches out to his brethren; he reaches out to those who have been dispersed. What does he speak to them about? He speaks to them of Christ; he speaks to them of their “inheritance”, 1 Pet 1: 4. He speaks to them of “the excellent glory”, 2 Pet 1: 17. He speaks to them about that priesthood. Think of that! He is drawing his brethren in, drawing his brethren into what he himself has proved as being the subject of the interceding of Christ.

Well, beloved, that is my message. It is brief; it is simple; but I trust it might be encouraging, and it might lift us up in relation to the Person of our Lord Jesus. We have before us tomorrow morning, if the Lord leaves us here, an opportunity to remember Him at the breaking of bread. I trust we will do that; I trust we will. It is what He desires and He has loved you enough to die for you. Will you remember Him? Will you find your part in the service of God? That is confirming to your brethren. That is answering to the interceding of Christ because by Him we approach to God. We trust that He will come but if the Lord leaves here, we will have the joy, we will have the privilege - of entering into the presence of God by Him - with Christ. He will take us in and set us free in the divine presence.

Well, beloved, may we all find our part in it and may we be encouraged for His Name's sake.

DUNDEE

8th November 2025

UNTIL THE DAY BE FULLY COME

Norman J Henry

Proverbs 4: 18

Acts 9: 3, 4; 22: 6, 7; 26: 23

Ephesians 1: 18; 3: 9

The path of the righteous goes on and brightens until the day be fully come. The day fully come is presented in the Ephesian epistle. God set the two lights in the heavens, the sun and the moon, and they were to enlighten the earth. And it says that they were there for signs, Gen 1: 14, 15. They are there for signs and seasons and day and night. I think that gives some sense of how heaven was acting morally with men, and it has entered into our own lives too. Heaven takes great account of righteous persons: the path of the righteous is as the shining light; it is how the truth has come to us, through righteous persons.

So I thought it was good to see when you come to the Acts, how it is very informative if you look at the accounts of Paul's conversion. First of all, it is Paul that fell to the ground. And then in chapter 26: 14, they all fell to ground. It shows the light. There was light coming into the souls of these persons that were with Paul on their way to Damascus, unlikely persons, but that is how God works. And then in Ephesians 1, you have the enlightening as to what the inheritance is in Christ where He is. And in chapter 3, it is enlightening all as to "the administration of the mystery" (v 9); that is the assembly. We see how things are opening up; God has a basis, and uses the apostle Paul to open up the truth, and God's mind comes in in assurance to His own. Only Paul heard His voice; but it is rather interesting that it was the shining light. Paul said it was "a great light". He went on to "a great light", and then the "light above the brightness of the sun": that was things becoming great to his own soul. But it is actually widening here, because all the company were also on the ground in chapter 26; it is enlightening persons. And that is how God operates. He operates first of all in the path of the righteous, but it extends beyond to affect those that are around us.

I thought it was rather interesting how God reserves total control of the light. It was a great light. Then it was a light above the brightness of the noon day sun. What strength there was in that light bringing that company down! Paul was the one that was there in the will of God, and the rest were, I suppose, persons who had not answered to the light. It is very special when the light is brightening until the day be fully come.

Now we are in the time when the day is fully come. That is Ephesians. You have got to get through to the highest note; the brightest note in our life is when the light of the assembly dawns in our souls. I know for myself that I was at the meeting and went on and on with little or no change, but suddenly light came into my soul. You suddenly see what is in Christ, and then you see what is in the assembly. That is how God works. I think it is very, very blessed, “the day be fully come”. And Paul is stretching as he speaks in Ephesians. I want to draw this to attention; he speaks of enlightening; the epistle to the Ephesians involves enlightening of the saints. You have “being enlightened in the eyes of your heart, that ye should know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”; you might say, it is what God is getting from it. You are getting light in your soul, “what the surpassing greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength, in which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead, and he set him down at his right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in that to come; and has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the assembly, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all”, v 19-23. We get the whole light of what the heavenly position of Christ is.

Then in chapter 3, you have this reference to enlightening all “with the knowledge of what is the administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God”; it could not be known otherwise. It was opened up in God's time. That was the fulness of time: Christ, in His place above, opens up the whole “administration of the mystery hidden throughout the ages in God, who has created all things, in order that now to the principalities and authorities in the heavenlies might be made known through the assembly, the all-various wisdom of God”; the whole universe is going to be enlightened. That is when these heavenly beings see Christ there in heaven.

Heavenly beings, angels, were active at the birth of Christ, and wondered at that whole thirty-three and a half years. Angelic beings must have wondered at it, amazed, at the thought that God would use them to protect His Christ. God did not use them at His death. In His ways, He allowed the Lord to go into death, and the angels must have wondered at it. And then they become active in the tomb; there are two angels, that are referred to in some accounts (John 20: 12), and they

were there witnessing. They knew that the Lord was no longer there. They were the first to announce the resurrection of Christ. And then we find the two disciples - it is amazing how scripture says that the two, Peter and John, went, but one ran faster than the other, v 4. But when John reached the tomb, he saw and believed - that is John's sign, v 8. He realised that God was working on that day; Christ's day was anticipated at that point.

And then there is something more that angelic beings are wondering at: the Spirit of God coming and the assembly being formed to bring individuals together, to enlighten them, and to bring them into the wealth of what Christ is in glory. And then it is going to spread out in the universe. I love to think of it that these beings, angelic beings and families, will wonder at what is secured in the assembly, and we will be able to judge, even these angelic beings, 1 Cor 6: 3. How great the assembly is! When you think about it, we are in the time when the day is fully come. I love to think we are in the best day. It is the end of the dispensation. We feel weak and plenty of things come into our minds. The enemy is very active at trying to make us feel everything is nearly lost. It is the best day because it is going to dawn soon. It is said it is the darkest before the dawn; the night is the darkest when that godless world surrounds us, even the public position. Everything in this world is going into darkness and the only way for us to be kept from it is the path of the righteous. I do not know any other way to be preserved in the dark world but that we are pursuing righteousness, until the day be fully come; it is not going to be night. We are looking forward today. Christ in glory is going to be universally recognised and seen. Think of the Jew, think of Israel, looking on Him "whom they pierced" (Zech 12: 10); they will wail because of it; they will sorrow what they did to Christ: the nation will do that. But we have a glorious Man; we are linked with Christ, where He is. That is the day fully come for us. It should cheer us, brethren: you say it is small here; it is about to fill the universe. That is what is going to happen. Christ is going to fill the universe with His glory, and the assembly is going to be with Him. So there is everything to pursue, and let it be brightening until the day be fully come.

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

Word in a ministry meeting in Glasgow

14th April 2026

EVERYTHING SUBJECTED TO CHRIST

Neil C McKay

1 Peter 3: 21, 22

Hebrews 2: 5-9

The verse read: “the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being subjected to him”, gives us the great fact that everything has now been placed in the hands of a Man. It is a most remarkable matter, as one has said, that the supreme authority in the universe is now in the hands of a *Man*. It involves the resolution of the moral issue. In the Lord having been given that position, one aspect is that we see what is our portion - we will be with Christ, be with Him in the world to come, which Hebrews speaks of; we will be with Him eternally, with Him in His glory. He has taken matters up on behalf of man. That is wonderful, but it also means that we should be subject to Him. That is what the scripture brings out, that this Man has been given that supreme place in order that we should be subject at the present time.

What Peter and the apostle who wrote Hebrews are pointing out is that the authority has not been placed elsewhere, in angels, but it has been placed in the hands of Christ. Our brother has just said that you might have thought angels being a superior order of being to man - not being subject to death and more powerful than man - that they would have great place: in Hezekiah's time one angel smote Sennacherib's army (Isa 37: 36) - one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in one night. We noted recently that the Lord said to Pilate, “Or thinkest thou that I cannot now call upon my Father, and he will furnish me more than twelve legions of angels?”, Matt 26: 53. Angels were not yet subjected to Him - He would at that time have called on the Father for them. They are now subjected to Him because of His moral greatness in meeting the matter of good and evil on the cross and coming out of it in resurrection. The angels are not simply taking that place of subjection to Him voluntarily; they are now placed in subjection to Christ. He was made some little inferior to them, positionally, on account of the sufferings of death, not morally, not personally, but positionally. He took a place of going into death, which angels were not subject to. He took that place, but as coming out of death God exalted that Man and glorified Him. He must now have a place greater than any other. We might speak of the superior order of being that angels represent, but

they could never be morally greater than Christ, or personally greater. So that all these are made subject to Him, “who is at the right hand of God, gone into heaven, angels, authorities and powers, being subjected to him”.

That therefore was a new thing, angels, powers, authorities being subjected to Christ; everything is now to be subjected to Christ. I suppose these two epistles are written to Jewish believers, to whom angels had had a prominent place. So He takes a place “so much better than the angels” (Heb 1: 4), and “to which of the angels said he ever ...”, v 5. The writer points out the superiority of Christ: angels, having had their place in the past dispensation under the hand of God, were now superseded by a morally superior order of manhood come in in Christ. He was made “some little inferior to angels on account of the suffering of death” but has now been “crowned with glory and honour”. It was “by the grace of God” that “he should taste death for everything”; that is, the whole matter of good and evil, the whole moral matter, has been settled by Christ. It behoves God that He should exalt this Man and crown Him with glory and honour.

Everything that had a moral stain on it, everything that was against God, everything that traduced God's name, Christ tasted death to meet it - to meet everything for God and to glorify God. Therefore that Man has been exalted and given the supreme place in the universe, and so we should be subject to Him. We will be with Him eternally, but now the great matter is to see that our present salvation lies in the moral pathway that He trod on this earth, that took Him to glory, as Hebrews points out. It is a wonderful thing, that there is a new position now, there is a new world order. We might say that it has not come to light yet. It says, “we see not yet all things subjected to *him*”. We are in an interim period when the subjection of all things has not yet been publicly asserted. But it will be shortly in the new order that has been established in a morally superior way in Christ. In the millennium men will see that this world has not been subjected to angels; it has been subjected to the Son of man.

May these things encourage us for His Name's sake.

Word in meeting for ministry in Glasgow

14th April 2026

THE JOURNEYS OF ISRAEL

Numbers 33

Paul A Gray

If the Holy Spirit has gone back over Israel's journey place by place, there is profit for us in considering the lessons associated with each one.

Rameses - Israel went out with a high hand, representing a public testimony to Egypt of the power of God, and the fact that the system of Egypt had no power to detain His people. God would have His son set free, to serve Him.

When Israel is at Rameses, we are told in verse 4, "And the Egyptians buried those whom Jehovah had smitten among them, all the firstborn; and upon their gods Jehovah executed judgments". God's judgment of Egypt is immediately clear.

Succoth - immediately after the departure from Egypt there was the commandment about who could eat the passover. The Red Sea was yet to come. Circumcision was required in order to eat the passover. However, the mixed multitude was also there. We find in Numbers 11: 4 that the mixed multitude were the ones who lusted and caused the people to long for Egypt again. It is not until Nehemiah 13: 3, in days of recovery, that they separated Israel from the mixed multitude, when Israel heard the law. The mixed multitude hankers after Egypt and it appears that they did not accept the lessons of the death of the firstborn in Egypt, or of the Red Sea where Egypt was slain. It is all very well to accept the blessings of God in liberating us from bondage, but we also have to accept that the system of sin (referred to in Romans 6 as the body of sin) is annulled in the death of Christ.

In Succoth, the feast of unleavened bread is also established. The features of inflation, characteristic of Egypt, cannot be carried into God's arrangements. For example, Pharaoh says, "My river is mine own, and I made it for myself", Ezek 29: 3. Man after the flesh attributes everything to himself, and nothing to God. The feast of unleavened bread maintains what is arrived at in circumcision.

At Succoth, we are also told, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had made the children of Israel swear an oath, saying, God will be sure to visit you; then ye shall carry my bones with

you hence”, Exod 13: 19. Joseph and all that he speaks of has no resting place in Egypt, and Egypt has no part in the first resurrection. Joseph's outlook, in faith, was towards the land.

Etham - this is where we are first told, “And Jehovah went before their face by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; so that they could go day and night”, Exod 13: 21. Whether it was day or night, Israel would have God alone for their guide.

Then God says, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea: before Baal-Zephon, opposite to it, shall ye encamp by the sea”, Exod 14: 2. They were to understand that the sea was impassable without divine intervention, and that Egypt was implacable. Satan will never give up trying to destroy the people of God.

But at the Red Sea, we see the truth that Jesus “...took part in the same,” [that is, took part in blood and flesh] “that through death he might annul him who has the might of death, that is, the devil”, Heb 2: 14. The impassable barrier was removed, and the implacable foe defeated, in Christ's death for us.

Having passed through the Red Sea, they are able to sing. They are coming into the light of redemption. They do not sing when the blood is on the doorposts and the lintel; at that point their salvation was assured, but they need to see the Egyptians dead on the sea-shore before they can sing. We are redeemed to God by the blood of Christ - not redeemed to live a better life in Egypt.

Then they went 3 days' journey into the wilderness of Etham, and they come to Marah. There they discover that the waters of Marah are bitter. There is nothing in the wilderness to minister to the flesh - our tastes need to be changed. And the only thing that will meet our need is Christ, who has been here in manhood and understands all the tests and trials of the wilderness, “For we have not a high priest not able to sympathise with our infirmities, but tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart”, Heb 4: 15. He alone can make the bitter waters sweet.

Then they come to Elim. Mr Coates comments that 'an obedient and healed people can enjoy Elim', Outline of Exodus p83. The twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees are ample provision for the assembly in the wilderness - they suggest the variety of what is

available through the Spirit, and through ministry.

It is interesting that Numbers 33 records that they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea (which is not recorded in Exodus 16) - as though God would remind them of His great deliverance. Yet despite this reminder, immediately they come to the wilderness of Sin, they murmur against Moses and Aaron. How fickle the flesh is. Even so, God was merciful - He brought up quails in the evening; later He gives them quails in judgment, but here it is simply a manifestation of His power to intervene in any circumstance. But quails are not God's full thought. God's full thought is Christ, and hence they have the manna, a provision sufficient for every day of the wilderness journey. Mr Darby calls the hidden manna -

... the hidden bread,
Of Christ, once humbled here, Hymn 79.

How God found His delight in Christ as Man, and how He desires that we too should find delight in His beloved Son. Christ humbled Himself, and the tests of the wilderness are needed to humble us - but in these tests we have an unfailing daily resource, a limitless supply, "for of his fulness we all have received, and grace upon grace", John 1: 16.

Dophkah and Aluth are only mentioned here. We do not know what happened in these places, but God does - and no doubt the exercises worked out there will come out in display, to God's glory.

Then the people arrive at Rephidim. They come "at the command of Jehovah" (Exod 17: 1); so this is a distinct point where God has in mind that they should learn something. Again they murmur, and God gives them the smitten rock, because -

O God, Thy grace no limit knows Hymn 407.

They have Christ, for the rock that followed them was the Christ (1 Cor 10: 4), and in His being smitten, they have the Spirit. They may not recognise all this yet, but it is there. But immediately Satan's hatred of all that is for God is awakened - he cannot tolerate a people who have got the benefit of Marah, who have had access to twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, who have the manna, and who have the water from the smitten rock. So Amalek comes out in force - a spirit of direct opposition to God, for his "hand is on the throne of Jah; Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation!", Exod 17: 16. Amalek is the grandson of Esau, the despiser of the birthright. He

cannot be avoided; he will not go away; he must be faced. I must ask myself, is there anything in me that despises the promises of God, that prefers earthly comforts to heavenly joys? Alas, I must confess that it is so - in me, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell.

There is a great representation of God's power in the saints in meeting Amalek. Moses has the staff of God in his hand, recognising God's power and His rights, yet he feels his weakness - and how badly we fare, if we do not feel our weakness. Here Moses represents the exercises of the people as considering for the rights of God. Joshua is there to lead the people, suggesting that the inward leadership of Christ is needed to meet the attack of the enemy. Then Aaron suggests the priestly support of Christ, which is essential to meeting every matter, and Hur (meaning 'purity') suggests the spirit of holiness which would reject all that is contrary to God's rights. Thus Amalek is defeated, but only through dependence, and subjection to Christ. Moses builds an altar, Jehovah-nissi - Jehovah my banner. It is the result of the victory, but now that banner must fly every day, for Amalek is unrelenting. We are told "The children of Israel shall encamp every one by his standard, with the ensign of their father's house", Num 2: 2. We do well to make our allegiances clear; there is safety and preservation in doing so and nobody can march under two banners that pull in different directions.

The people move from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai - nothing is said in Numbers 33 of the giving of the law, and in boundless grace, the incident at Horeb involving the golden calf is not referred to. Psalm 78: 40 says -

How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness,
and grieve him in the desert!

and how thankful we should be that just a couple of verses earlier, we read, "But he was merciful", v 38. No doubt the land was in view, and hence the law of the land (which we see in its detail in Deuteronomy) was what would be prominent.

Next mentioned is Kibroth-hattaavah. This is just after Taberah, where the people murmured and God sent a fire which consumed some at the extremity of the camp. We should not murmur, and the extremity of the camp - as close to the world as possible - is not a safe place. But despite this lesson, this warning, the mixed multitude long again for Egypt's food. In passing, it is striking that the food - cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic - gets stronger at each

step; the bland cucumber eventually leads to the strong garlic. The enemy would give us a taste for the little things, the things that are 'harmless', but he will move us on to stronger tastes as quickly as he may, if we allow him. But what becomes clear is that the people at large had grown weary of the manna; they were trying to alter its form, to make it palatable to natural tastes. Christ is perfect as He is. There is no place for man's mind - Christ cannot be enhanced, and nor can He be altered to suit natural preferences. We can see how utterly displeasing to God this is, although in His goodness the manna is not withdrawn. However, He also gives the people quails, but this time in judgment, for he smites them with a very great plague. We are told in Psalm 78: 30, 31 that

They were not alienated from their lust, their meat was yet in their mouths,
When the anger of God went up against them.

God will not see His Son despised.

Next is Hazeroth - there, Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, Num 11. God makes clear that Moses is faithful in all His house, and that He speaks to Moses "mouth to mouth". We know from Exodus 33: 11 that God "spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend". In type, Miriam and Aaron despise the Apostle of our confession. It is striking that Miriam is first in the matter, and suffers the graver consequence of leprosy. This suggests that the root of the matter lay in a failure of subjection. Aaron, seeing God's rebuke, repents of the matter immediately, but it is Moses who intercedes with God - such is the abundance of grace, that the one offended is the one who intercedes. Think of the Lord on the cross - "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", Luke 23: 34. But nonetheless, Miriam must be "shamed seven days" - there must be a testimony to the wrong done, before she can be received and before the people can move again.

Nothing is said elsewhere in relation to Israel's journeys of Rithmah, Rimmon-perez, Libnah, Rissah, Kehelathah, mount Shapher, Haradah, Makheloth, Tahath, Terah, Mithcah, or Hashmonah. This could be likened to the Dark Ages - the Lord stood by His church, and there were true believers in it, and individual exercises no doubt, but there was little of spiritual movement until the Reformation. We can be sure from hymn 279 -

Jesus! the very thought of Thee,
With sweetness fills the breast,

written by Bernard of Clairvaux in the 12th century, that God's work was going on during that period.

Moseroth and Bene-Jaakan are next mentioned - we are told in Deuteronomy 10: 6, "And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth-Bene-Jaakan to Moserah: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son exercised the priesthood in his stead". In Numbers 33: 38 it is said that Aaron died on mount Hor. Deuteronomy may be taken to present assurance that the priesthood continued (and how thankful we are for Christ who "has the priesthood unchangeable", (Heb 7: 24)), whereas in Numbers 33, the spiritual elevation of Aaron is more in view.

Hor-hagidgad is not mentioned elsewhere; next is Jotbathah, which we know from Deuteronomy 10: 7 is a land of water-brooks. How good God is, that after the death of Aaron he would provide a place of refreshment and comfort for His own. Abronah is not mentioned elsewhere; next is Ezion-geber, where we see from Deuteronomy 2 that they were not to go to war with Esau or with the Moabites, although God makes clear that these would have no part in the inheritance. But now the land is directly in view - God says, "Ye have gone round this mountain long enough: turn you northward", Deut 2: 3. There was to be no further distraction from their objective. Next they encamp in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. This is where Miriam dies. She speaks of one who rejoiced in God's deliverance but did not go on to His full purpose. And as commented earlier, Aaron dies on mount Hor.

Next they meet the Canaanite, the king of Arad, and make a vow that they would destroy all his cities if Jehovah gave them the land. The judgment of the Canaanite gives God a moral basis to bring His people into the land. Nevertheless they must first face the sorrowful fact of a constant hankering after Egypt, which leads to God's government in the form of the fiery serpents. In God's mercy there was the serpent of brass upon a pole, and everyone who looked on it lived. How essential that we look on Jesus, of whom it says, "Him who knew not sin, [God] has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him", 2 Cor 5: 21.

The people next pass through Zalmonah and Punon, of which nothing is said elsewhere. Oboth, and Ijim-Abarim, in the border of

Moab, are mentioned in Numbers 21, where the wilderness of Moab is said to be “towards the sun rising”, v 11. Christ is coming more distinctly into view, but the Person of the Spirit must be acknowledged for the full glory of Christ to dawn. It is striking that Beer (the well) is not explicitly mentioned in Numbers 33, but the border of Moab is on the way to that. This suggests that the Spirit never seeks prominence in His account of the movements of the testimony, but rather gives prominence to Christ.

There follow Dibon-Gad, and Almon-Diblathaim. Next the people come to the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo, which is the peak from which Moses saw the inheritance. Thereafter they come to the plains of Moab, where Balak sought to induce Balaam to curse Israel. God would not countenance it, and causes Balaam to confess, “At this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!”, Num 23: 23. Nevertheless Israel were ensnared by the idolatry of Moab, and were smitten by a plague. It required the public intervention of Phinehas (Num 25), showing that the priesthood had identified itself with God's true judgment, for the plague to be stayed. If Satan cannot divert the people at the start of his journey by the incursion of the Amalekite, he will cast a snare before them at the end of it, in an attempt to prevent them from coming into the land.

Then at last, it is the Jordan of Jericho, where the people must shortly acknowledge in figure that as Christ has died for them, so also they must die with Him. But first, God reminds them of the importance of dispossessing the inhabitants of the land - God will countenance nothing that would spoil the enjoyment of His thoughts, and that is why he has not only chosen us in Christ before the world's foundation, marking us out for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, and taking us into favour in the Beloved, but has also ensured that we have redemption through His blood (the blood of Jesus), and the forgiveness of offences, according to the riches of His grace. God will have the full riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and nothing will intrude upon it.

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