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## Austin Bible Church Training Ministry

a *Grace Notes* Study

# RUTH

by Warren Doud



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*Grace Notes*

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# RUTH

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Ruth, Chapter One .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Ruth 1:1.....	7
Ruth 1:2,3.....	8
Ruth 1:4.....	8
Ruth 1:5.....	8
Ruth 1:6.....	9
Ruth 1:7.....	9
Ruth 1:8.....	9
Ruth 1:9.....	10
Ruth 1:10.....	10
Ruth 1:11.....	10
Ruth 1:12.....	10
Ruth 1:13.....	11
Ruth 1:14.....	11
Ruth 1:15.....	11
Ruth 1:16,17 .....	12
Ruth 1:18, 19 .....	12
RUTH 1:20-22.....	13
<b>Ruth, Chapter 2 .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Ruth 2:1.....	13
Ruth 2:2.....	14
Ruth 2:3.....	14
Ruth 2:4.....	14
Ruth 2:5.....	15
Ruth 2:6,7.....	15
Ruth 2:8.....	16
Ruth 2:9.....	16
Ruth 2:10.....	17
Ruth 2:11.....	17
Ruth 2:12.....	17
Ruth 2:13.....	18
Ruth 2:14.....	18
Ruth 2:15, 16 .....	18
Ruth 2:17.....	18
Ruth 2:18.....	18

---

---

Ruth 2:19, 20 .....	19
Ruth 2:21-23 .....	19
<b>Ruth, Chapter 3 .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Ruth 3:1.....	19
Ruth 3:2.....	20
Ruth 3:3.....	21
Ruth 3:4-6 .....	21
Ruth 3:7.....	22
Ruth 3:8,9.....	22
Ruth 3:10.....	23
Ruth 3:11.....	23
Ruth 3:12,13 .....	24
Ruth 3:14.....	24
Ruth 3:15.....	24
Ruth 3:16-18 .....	25
<b>Ruth, Chapter 4 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
Ruth 4:1.....	25
Ruth 4:2.....	26
Ruth 4:3,4.....	26
Ruth 4:5.....	27
Ruth 4:6.....	27
Ruth 4:7,8.....	28
Ruth 4:9, 10 .....	28
Ruth 4:11,12 .....	28
Ruth 4:13.....	29
Ruth 4:14-16 .....	29
Ruth 4:17.....	30
Ruth 4:18-22 .....	30
<b>Topical Studies.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Agriculture in Palestine .....	31
Bethlehem-Judah.....	32
Blessing.....	32
Christian in the Work Place .....	35
Depression and the Bible.....	35
Faith .....	39
Faith-Rest .....	43
Faithfulness of God.....	52
Forgiveness .....	52
Husband of a Happy Wife .....	53
Inheritance .....	55
Levitical Sacrifices and Offerings.....	55
The Moabites .....	60

---

---

Old Age .....	62
Occupation with Christ.....	65
Peace with God; The Peace of God .....	70
Promotion.....	71
Purity in the Christian Life .....	73
Redemption.....	75
Separation.....	78
Servants and Slaves in Palestine .....	79
Volitional Responsibility .....	81
Worry.....	82

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## The Ruth Curriculum

There are ten (10) lesson in the RUTH course curriculum. There will be questions in the Quiz for each lesson on the topics that are named here.

Lessons	Topics to Study
<b>Lesson 1: Ruth 1:1-10</b>	<b>The Moabites; Bethlehem; Faith-Rest</b>
Lesson 2: Ruth 1:11-22	Old Age; Worry; Peace; Depression
Lesson 3: Ruth 2:1-7	Servants/Slaves in Palestine; Agriculture in Palestine; Faithfulness of God
Lesson 4: Ruth 2:8-14	Christian in the Work Place; Levitical Sacrifices and Offerings
Lesson 5: Ruth 2:15-23	Blessing; Faith
Lesson 6: Ruth 3:1-6	Redemption
Lesson 7: Ruth 3:7-11	Occupation with Christ; Purity in the Christian Life; Separation
Lesson 8: Ruth 3:12-18	Promotion
Lesson 9: Ruth 4:1-8	[No topics]
Lesson 10: Ruth 4:9-22	Husband of a Happy Wife; The Christian's Inheritance

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## Introduction

There are many reasons to study the book of RUTH, not the least of which is that RUTH is an interesting and absorbing story, a true history that provides many benefits and joys to the reader. RUTH is an account of extreme testing of simple people, people who exhibit their trust in God under great duress. RUTH provides practical application of the concepts of God's grace towards believers.

- RUTH shows how legal affairs and charity were exercised in the days of the Judges.
- RUTH provides a thorough picture of Redemption, through the agency of Boaz, the Kinsman-Redeemer, who is a type of Christ in this respect.
- Ruth and Naomi were totally without resources, driven to the last extreme of poverty. They owned only what they could carry cross country.
- Ruth was positive to the Lord God of Israel. She had seen something in the family's testimony that led her to trust the Lord, Naomi's God.
- Ruth learned that a redeemer existed. She waited patiently for the Lord's leading. From the moment she walked into Bethlehem, she had a good reputation in the community. She did not try to solve her own problems outside of the Lord's will by trying to find a man to marry.
- This was temporal salvation in the sense that basic necessities would be provided. Of course, Ruth received far more than the basics.
- For the rest of her life, Ruth enjoyed prosperity and a fruitful relationship with Boaz. David was her great grandson. Ruth, a Gentile, was in the line of Christ.

RUTH introduces us to the ancestors of King David. This is probably the best illustration of the blessings enjoyed by generations of godly people which is the result of yielding to the divine leadership of almighty God.

The book tells us how Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons emigrated to Moab on account of a famine, how Elimelech died in Moab, how his sons married Moabite women, and how Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah were left in bereavement and poverty with the deaths of Mahlon and Chilion.

Then, we are told how Ruth went with Naomi back to Judah, to take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel, and how, when she was going out to glean in the fields to eke out an existence, she came to a field owned by Boaz, a near relation of Elimelech, and became acquainted with this honorable and gracious man.

In chapter 3 and 4 we see how Ruth was directed by Naomi to request levirate marriage with Boaz, how they followed all the legal forms of such an arrangement, how they were married and honored by the local people, and how they had a son, Obed, David's grandfather.

The book of RUTH gives us the inner story of the spiritual and moral background of a family who walked uprightly before God and man and showed piety, great singleness of heart, modesty and purity of life.

Ruth had a very strong desire for the God of Israel and His people, and she sought a relationship with God with great earnestness. Boaz was an upright "man of dignity", full of reverence for all of God's ordinances, and forthright in making practical application of godly principles.

As Judah begat Perez from Tamar the Canaanite woman, as Salmon begat Boaz from Rahab the woman of Jericho, so the Moabite woman Ruth was incorporated into the family of Judah, from which Christ was to spring according to the flesh (Matt. 1:3-5). It is from such ancestors as these that David was descended.

Put all the facts together and you have a great family history. Ask yourself, how much was the character of Boaz affected by his mother Rahab's testimony and courage? He was known as "a mighty man of wealth", a distinguished citizen of sterling character. And how much were the

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faith of Jesse, David's father, and of David himself, influenced by the momentum established by previous faithful generations?

This is a great family, distinguished in every generation by solid believers who set the relationship with God as the top priority in their lives. They subordinated all family, business, and social life to God's will and plan, and they enjoyed the many-generation blessings that accrued as a result.

## Ruth, Chapter One

### Acknowledgements:

I want to take the opportunity at the first of this study to acknowledge my indebtedness to scholars from whose work I have "gleaned" much useful knowledge. At the feet of such Christians of the past, I receive by God's grace the benefit of their work in the painstaking examination of the scriptures. The most important resources I used are the following:

Edersheim, Alfred, "Bible History, Old Testament

Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F., "Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume II, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I & II Samuel", Wm. B. Eerdmans

McCalley, Chester, Notes and Outline from his teaching at Beth Haven Church, North Kansas City, Missouri

Morris, Leon, "Ruth: An Introduction and Commentary", Intervarsity Press

Unger, Merrill F., "Bible Dictionary

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In the time of the Judges, Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to live in Moab, about 40 or 50 miles from Bethlehem, but on the other side of the Jordan River. There was a famine in Judah.

Elimelech died in Moab, and his two sons married Moabite women names Orpah and Ruth. But in the course of the years, these two men also died, so that Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left to themselves.

When Naomi got word that the Lord had once brought the land in Judah back into fruitfulness, she set out with Orpah and Ruth to return home. But on the way she strongly urged them to turn back and remain with their own families. Orpah did so, but Ruth declared that she would not leave her mother-in-law, and went with her to Bethlehem.

### Ruth 1:1

**Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem -Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.**

There is no need to establish the historical perspective of this book beyond stating the general time period, the "days when the judges ruled.

The time of the famine is not certain, although it is natural to connect it with the devastation caused by the Midianites (Judges 6). Any famine that would have compelled Elimelech to emigrate to Moab would have been severe and extending over the whole of Israel. It was not until ten years later that Naomi felt safe to return to Bethlehem.

The Midianites oppressed Israel for seven years, and their invasions were usually accompanied by the destruction of the produce of the soil (Judges 6:3,4), from which famine could easily result.

Some prophetic books are carefully dated to establish a time point of view for prophecies. See Eze. 1:1-3; Isa. 1:1; Jer. 1:1ff. Some historical books are dated to give chronological perspective.

Boaz was the son of Salmon and Rahab. Attempts to date this book rely on this fact plus the fact of the famine. The best guess seems to be that Ruth took place during the judgeship of Gideon, at the time of the Midianite invasion. There are no Bible statements to back this up.

Given this rough time frame, the story of Ruth would have occurred at approximately the time of the Trojan wars. It is interesting to make

comparisons with the Greek king and queen, Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and the Trojan princess, Helen of Troy (the face that launched a thousand ships), with the characters of the book of Ruth.

Elimelech may have been a victim of the "grass is greener" syndrome, in this case, both literally and figuratively. He was a landowner in Bethlehem and could probably have weathered the hard times. Boaz, after all, did not leave.

This is a personal story of plain people; no heroes here. The story is serene and pleasant. It's about family, hard work, a community, friends, and the plan of God at the working level.

Elimelech was probably from one of the older established families. In verse 2 his family are called Ephrathites. The Jewish Midrash has an interpretation of Ephrath which means "aristocrats". And the fact that Naomi drew so much attention when she came back indicates she was well known.

The word "to sojourn" is the usual Hebrew word for a being a resident alien and indicates that there was no thought of their staying in Moab permanently. Note: the family shares the fathers prosperity or his poverty, his blessing or his suffering.

#### Ruth 1:2,3

**And the name of the man was Elimelech (God is King), and the name of his wife was Naomi (pleasant; delightful), and the name of his two sons, Mahlon (weak; sickly) and Chilion (failing; pining); Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah, and they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and Naomi was left, and her two sons.**

Topic: BETHLEHEM

We don't know how long they were in Moab or what they did up until Elimelech's death. This is a devastating event. Women in those days were entirely dependent on the men in their lives,

because they had very few alternatives in the supply of their daily needs.

But at this point, Naomi still has her two sons on whom to depend.

#### Ruth 1:4

**And they took themselves wives of the women of Moab; and the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other, Ruth; and they dwelled there ten years.**

[ Which man married Ruth? The answer is in RUTH.]

The family has settled in for a long stay. If they had planned to go back to Judah within a couple of years, marriage probably would have been put off.

There was no law against marrying Moabites. The prohibition was against marrying Canaanites, Deut. 7:3, and Moab was not in Canaan.

There was a prohibition against allowing Moabites into the congregation, Deut. 23:3, and it seems that the offspring of such a marriage would have been prohibited from becoming a member of the congregation. Jewish theologians suggest that this prohibition was limited to males, so that there was no legal problem of a Jewish man marrying a Moabite woman. This seems reasonable since there was no stigma placed on David because his great-grandmother was a Moabite.

There would often have been spiritual fallout, however, in such marriages, because Moabites were idolaters, and the worship of Chemosh was particularly perverted. Remember that one of Solomon's many wives was Moabite, and she led him into idolatry.

Topic: THE SONS OF NOAH

Topic: THE MOABITES

#### Ruth 1:5

**And Mahlon and Chilion died also, both of them, and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.**



This is a very distressing situation. The death of her sons has left Naomi destitute.

The Talmud regards this as punishment for leaving Judah in the first place, but there is nothing specific in this book to indicate divine discipline (chastisement).

For one thing, Elimelech may not have been moving his family out of a place of spiritual blessing (Judah). If the example of the time of Gideon is any indication, most Israelites worshipped Baal and other idols during much of the period of the Judges. So there may have been no more spiritual life available in Judah than in Moab.

Naomi now has no land, no money, and no prospects. She is totally indigent.

She cannot expect support from the Moabites; they are not of her people. There is no employment for her outside of a family situation. Her only hope is to make it back to Bethlehem where there is enough to eat and where she can count on the charity of the people.

#### Ruth 1:6

**Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread.**

The word "visited" is used here in the sense of God's bringing blessing, the end of the famine. The bread that is now available is regarded as the gift of God. It is a word which refers to divine activity. (In Jer. 25:12, by contrast, God's "visit" is in the sense of bringing punishment.)

When God visits, everything depends on the state of affairs that He finds. The implication of this word is that we must not presume on God. He will bring blessing if He can do so without compromising His character. In Grace and in Love, God finds a way to bless.

#### Ruth 1:7

**Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in**

**law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.**

It does not take them long to get their things together. They are leaving with what they can carry. They walked along the road together a ways before they split up to go their separate ways.

#### Ruth 1:8

**And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead, and with me.**

This is the first use of dialogue in the book. Dialogue is used in 52 of the 88 verses in Ruth.

When they had gone a short distance "on the way" to Judah, Naomi encourages the younger women to leave her and to return to their own homes. It is not part of her plan to involve them in a change of culture; so she tells them to return each to her mother's home.

Possible reasons why Naomi told them to stay in Moab:

- Prejudice against non-Jews in Palestine.
- Prejudice against Moabites in particular, Deut. 23:3 ff
- There are no prospects for young widows of any nationality. They have better prospects for marriage and a living with their own families
- Naomi is now poor and unable to care for them.

Some commentators blame Naomi for encouraging them to stay in sinful, pagan Moab. But the context of Ruth, and particularly Naomi's own words, indicate that Naomi understands certain Grace principles of establishment and does not hesitate to express them. For example, Naomi prays that Jehovah will deal kindly with them. She does not say that Chemosh, the Moabite god, would look after them. She uses the personal name of the God of Israel. She never gives consideration to any other god.

The phrase "deal kindly with" represents a Hebrew expression which is often translated "with loving kindness". It is a word which sometimes means something like "loyalty", and sometimes like "love". In the O.T. it is often related to the Covenants and God's loving relationship with His people

Jehovah is a faithful and loving God and Naomi knows that He will deal lovingly with the daughters-in-law.

### Ruth 1:9

**The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. They she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.**

Naomi adds a prayer for their future prosperity, praying specifically that Ruth and Orpah will remarry. Marriage is the only career open to them. And what else did they have to look forward to other than to share Naomi's poverty?

Rest" implies a home, in this context. Finding a husband and a home will provide security. But to the Hebrew, the word "rest" means much more in terms of spiritual security and the blessing of the Lord.

Topic: FAITH-REST (Trust in God, leading to peace)

READ Joshua 21:43 to 22:6

They kiss each other farewell.

Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah start the 40+ mile trek back to Canaan. The next verses show Ruth and Orpah (the two widows of Elimelech's sons) making some crucial decisions, decisions which send them on different courses of life. Orpah returns to Moab with its pagan religion and culture; Ruth goes on to a life of blessing and prosperity, and to a place of honor in the line of King David and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Ruth 1:10

**And they said unto her, Surely we will return with you unto your people.**

At this point, both Ruth and Orpah agree - they both thought of going to Judah with Naomi.

They were adults, and in that society they were free to choose. There is no obligation to return to Moab.

As we will see, Orpah decided to return to the protection of her home and family, which in itself is not wrong. But she had as much information as Ruth did about God, His provision, and His people in Judea. Ruth's choice was not the "safe" one, but a stepping out in faith, with only enough doctrinal "light" for the first few steps of her path.

### Ruth 1:11

**And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will you go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?**

Naomi will not commit them to an uncertain life. Naomi herself is not a strong woman of faith, as shown in the final verses of this chapter. She is frightened and has little concept of God's plan or provision. She thinks that Ruth and Orpah are young enough to remarry and find security in Moab.

Naomi is too old for marriage. She refers here to levirate marriage, marriage with a kinsman to preserve the name and inheritance of the dead. She is certainly familiar with the principle, and she knows kinsmen who would be qualified, as we see in the next chapters. But she is of such an age that there is very little prospect that a kinsman will marry her in Bethlehem. She is sure that she is in for a life of poverty and uncertainty ("The Lord has brought me home again empty.")

Read Deut. 25:5-10 on levirate marriage.

At this point there is also a levirate marriage prospect for Orpah and Ruth. Mahlon and Chilion had also died childless; and their widows might normally have looked to marrying kinsmen as a means of support and to have children.

### Ruth 1:12

**Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, "I have hope", if I should**

**have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons:**

Naomi then takes a different line in trying to persuade the young women to stay in Moab. She says "Even though I were married right now and had baby boys, you could not wait until they were grown." Naomi is clear that there is no point in their going with her. Notice that she does not hold out any prospect of their marrying anyone outside of the immediate family. This is probably because of the prejudice against non-Jews in Palestine.

#### Ruth 1:13

**Would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.**

The word "nay" has a ring of finality to it. This is not an easy decision for her, and she goes on to express regret. The phrase "it grieves me much" is better translated "it is very bitter to me." The complete phrase would go "It is far more bitter for me than for you."

The two young women had "just" lost a husband, while Naomi had lost a husband and two sons. Moreover, Ruth and Orpah had some hope of remarriage, security, and happiness. But Naomi seems embittered by the thought that she has only old age, poverty, and living on charity to look forward to.

Topic: OLD AGE

Here we get a glimpse of Naomi's mental attitude of blaming God. There is nothing in the context to indicate that she considers these circumstances to be God's punishment for something. Naomi knows that God is a sovereign God, and that nothing happens by chance. She thought that God was to blame for her misery; she may have thought that He was punishing her for something, although there is no idea of divine discipline in this context.

The phrase "the hand of the Lord" is an anthropomorphism used fairly often in the Bible. The Old Testament particularly uses parts of the

body freely to express the activity of God. So we have "the eye of the Lord," "the hand of the Lord," "the ear of the Lord", etc.

Naomi thinks that God has acted against her. Part of her reasoning, then, may be that it would not be good for Ruth and Orpah to accompany her, because she was not in favor with God.

#### Ruth 1:14

**And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave to her.**

This was the kiss of farewell for Orpah. Naomi's words had sunk in, and there was a reaction from each of the young women.

Orpah is often blamed for her decision here, but there is no real cause to criticize her. First, she was persuaded by the counsel of someone who had her best interests in mind, Naomi. Second, she was not wrong to go back to her family. We don't know whether she was a believer in Jehovah.

While we should not be too quick to blame Orpah, at the same time we must notice that Ruth was not so easily persuaded. She had given her loyalty to Naomi (in marrying in to the family), and she would not lightly withdraw her loyalty.

Ruth's was a tough decision. It involved forsaking her family, forsaking her prospects of marriage in Moab, forsaking her religion and culture, and placing trust in God. But her subsequent reputation and personal testimony in Bethlehem bears out that she had placed complete trust in the God of Israel and had decided to take shelter "under His wings".

#### Ruth 1:15

**And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.**

Naomi uses the example of Orpah to induce Ruth to do the same. The reference to returning to "her gods" may point to a belief that there was a certain connection between a god and the territory where the god was worshipped, so that

a god could only be worshipped on the soil of its own country.

In 2 Kings 5, Naaman the Syrian, having become a worshipper of Jehovah, took "two mules' burden of earth" with him, in the mistaken assumption that he would need it to be able to worship Jehovah in Syria.

But this idea was not held by everyone. So we see that Solomon worshipped the Moabite God, Chemosh, on the soil of Judah. And Naomi had no such idea, because she had made it plain that she was aware that God was just as active in Moab as in Judah. So her words need mean no more than that Moabites were Chemosh worshippers.

Topic: THE MOABITES

#### Ruth 1:16,17

**And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people and thy God my God:**

**Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.**

This response of Ruth's is one of the classic expressions in history of faithfulness and loyalty. She first tells Naomi to stop pleading with her to leave. Then she affirms her determined decision to go where Naomi goes.

Ruth knows that this means she will be cut off from her own nation; but she is willing to make Naomi's people her own.

Her decision is also that in favor of Jehovah, and against the gods of Moab. Naomi's God will be her God. Some people say that she rates friendship above faith; but in verse 17 she affirms her faith in God and her yieldedness to His sovereignty.

Her views of religion might not be clear: but it is evident that a principle of vital godliness was rooted in her heart, and powerfully operative in

her life. In fact, she acted in perfect conformity with that injunction that was afterwards given by our Lord, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Charles Simeon in *Horae Homileticae*, III, 1847.)

Ruth will stay with Naomi until death. There is reason to believe that Ruth was also motivated by concern for Naomi and that she was determined to care for her mother-in-law. (Ruth 2:11,12)

The reference to burial was a reflection of the great importance placed by Eastern people in being buried in the proper location, a location that has significance. (Note that Abraham purchased a burial site from the Hittites.)

Ruth's calling down punishment on herself as a form of an oath does not specify the type of punishment. Perhaps the phrase was accompanied by a gesture.

#### Ruth 1:18, 19

**When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.**

**So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?**

Naomi was impressed and persuaded by Ruth's impassioned speech. She accepted the situation and stopped trying to convince Ruth.

The journey back to Bethlehem is not described. It would have been a walk of about 40 miles, the two women carrying as much as they could with them. It could have taken as long as three or four days.

The reception of the widows is described, however. They receive a welcome, but Naomi could not help contrasting her present difficult condition with the way she was when she had left ten years earlier. But she was familiar enough to be recognized.

The whole village was excited and involved, although mostly the women. The verb "they said" is in the feminine gender. The men were undoubtedly working in the fields.

The years had probably dealt harshly with Naomi. There is no doubt that ten years of toil and a great deal of sorrow would change anyone's appearance in the best of circumstances.

#### RUTH 1:20-22

**And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Marah: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.**

**I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?**

**So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of the barley harvest.**

Marah" means "the bitter one". Recall the first stop for the Jews in their wilderness wanderings was Marah, the place of bitter water.

When Naomi said she was "full", it was not in money and property, but in the possession of a husband and two sons. She was a rich mother, but now all that makes her heart glad has been taken from her, so she is now "empty".

Naomi is undoubtedly exhausted, physically and emotionally. She has lost everything, and she has no hope of any recovery. It is one thing to be able to rejoice in the prosperity the Lord provides, or when testings are relatively light. But the great tests of poverty, deprivation, tremendous sorrow require great maturity and experience of faith in God if they are to be experienced without bitterness and mortal fear.

The account of Naomi and Ruth's journey back to Bethlehem draws to a close here. The events of chapter 2 are introduced in 1:22 with a reference to the barley harvest. The harvest in

Judea began with the barley harvest. Leviticus 23:10,11.

## Ruth, Chapter 2

### Ruth 2:1

**And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.**

This chapter gives us a look at the life of the poor in ancient Palestine. There were not many ways for widows to make a living. One method open to them was that of gleaning in the fields at harvest time.

It was laid down in the law that a landowner must not reap the land to the very borders, nor was he to pick up what was left after the reapers had gone through.

Read Leviticus 19:9,10 and 23:22

If a reaper forgot a sheaf of grain and left it there in the field, he was forbidden to go back for it. (Deut. 24:19) In such ways provision was made for the poor. They could go through the fields or the vineyards of grapes or olive orchards and glean what they could.

It was a good thing that Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest, for it enabled them to get some food right away, probably lentils and barley at first; and the wheat harvest was only a few weeks away.

### Topic: AGRICULTURE IN PALESTINE

Boaz is now brought on the scene. He is a kinsman, but his exact relationship is not defined. He was not a direct relation of Naomi, but of her husband, Elimelech. In fact, if he had been Naomi's kinsman he could not have helped her as "kinsman-redeemer". He was also not the closest relative; as you see by reading ahead Boaz told Ruth that there was a "kinsman closer than I".

The expression "mighty man of wealth" is translated elsewhere in the Old Testament as "mighty man of valor". So we get the force of

the more modern word "knight". He would have been a warrior in time of conflict, but in peace he has a different kind of influence.

Boaz would have prominence by reason of his direct descent from Judah, if for no other reason. So he appears here as a solid citizen, a man of influence and integrity in the community.

#### Ruth 2:2

**And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.**

Ruth takes the initiative now by suggesting that she go to the field to glean.

The author does not lose sight of Ruth's origin in this book. Of the twelve uses of Ruth's name, five have the word "Moabite" attached to them.

There is no loss of pride in gleaning. Gleaning is honorable work, a grace provision of the Lord for poor people. Where the Lord provides prosperity in a community, there is enough in the leftovers to care for the indigent.

Ephesians 4:28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

The principle is that prosperity comes to an individual so that provision might be made for those who are in genuine need of help. Gleaning is true charity, but it is charity that requires the able-bodied to work and maintain self-esteem.

Both the rich and the poor trust God for the provision He makes for them.

The situation is that all the farmers work in one large field. Ownership is vested in parts of the one big field.

Ruth will try to find a sympathetic farmer to glean with. While the law applied to everyone, a hostile or greedy landowner could break the law or find ways to make life miserable for the gleaners. And Ruth was undoubtedly aware that she could run into some prejudice because of her nationality.

There are always plenty of reasons a person can find for hoarding his goods to himself. The history of the Jews has plenty of examples of how people developed ways to get around the laws of God. Making life hard for gleaners was just one of them. The plan of God works best in the presence of obedience to His laws and a willing heart.

#### Ruth 2:3

**And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and she happened to come to a portion of the land belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.**

She probably went gleaning several days before she came to Boaz' field; it says she "went and came". It's possible that she tried several places before she found friendly people.

Ruth did not know the people or the property owners. So it was apparently by chance that she was working in Boaz' portion of the fields. But men do not control events; the hand of God is behind events as He works out His purpose.

God is in all these happenings which lead up to the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, the birth of Obed, and the continuation of the royal line from Judah through David to Christ.

#### Ruth 2:4

**And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, the Lord bless thee.**

Boaz lived in Bethlehem and came to his fields after the reapers had started for the day. He had a friendly relationship with the workers who were employed by him. His greeting, and their reply, indicates that Boaz' spiritual life extends into his everyday affairs.

The greeting was probably a common one; but coming from a devout man it would have had a great deal more meaning.

In our generation, many Christians tend to stratify their lives, to separate the secular from the religious. For them, there is a time to work,

a time to play, and a little time for the Lord. Many times such a Christian's spiritual life is perfunctory.

The Jew in Palestine, however, was reminded of his relationship to the Lord, of his obligations, and of the standards the Lord had set for his life. Almost every day had its ceremony, its sacrifice, its fast, or its celebration.

But some people find these practices boring, inconvenient, and expensive. It would have been very frustrating to the person whose heart is not in it. Some Jews in ancient times, like their brethren in modern Christianity, sought every excuse to neglect their duties, to slide by the obligations, to get by with not attending, not paying, not obeying.

But Boaz is an example of a man who thrived under the Lord's leading and fellowship. In his attitude toward others, his care for Ruth and Naomi, and in his attitude toward his servants can be seen his gracious and loving character.

#### Ruth 2:5

**Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?**

It would not be difficult for Boaz to notice that there was a new face among the gleaners. We should not suppose that this question indicated any more than curiosity. Boaz' interest in Ruth became more keen when he found out who she was. But even then we should not presume that this was love at first sight.

The word "servant" and "damsel" are the same Hebrew word in masculine and feminine. The term is used frequently for "servant", male and female. Boaz is inquiring as to Ruth's owner, in case she was an indentured servant. This concept is explained in the topical study referenced here.

Topic: SERVANTS AND SLAVES IN PALESTINE

The Christian believer is to have an attitude of submission toward the Lord as of servant to master.

Psalm 132:2, "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us.

Proverbs 27:18, "Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honored.

There is great delight in serving God, and great reward. There is no shame in being the servant of a great and kind man like Boaz. Nor is there shame in being the servant (slave) of God. The apostle Paul often referred to himself as a slave of Jesus Christ, and he spoke with great satisfaction.

Titus 2:9,10 "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

#### Ruth 2:6,7

**And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.**

And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued from the morning until now, except that she tarried a little in the house.

The indication is that the story of Naomi's return, accompanied by Ruth, was by now well known. It would have been significant enough in any small community like Bethlehem. And there was the added interest in Ruth's decision to come with Naomi, something that undoubtedly was very unusual.

The servant reported that Ruth had approached him on this day to ask about gleaning there. She did not demand her rights to glean; but she was "seeking one in whose eyes" she would find graciousness.

She worked diligently, resting only for a little. There is difficulty with the phrase "she tarried a little in the house" because it is not known what

the house might be. She wouldn't have gone all the way back into town to rest at home. Neither is it likely that there was a permanent house next to the field. This may have been a temporary tent or shelter set up to provide a resting place for workers.

Topic: FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

### Ruth 2:8

**Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:**

Boaz knows by now that Ruth is a kinswoman by marriage. The most that we can see in this passage is that Boaz takes extra concern for Ruth because she is a member of his extended family. We see that he is a gracious man and would allow any poor person to glean in his fields. But he obviously is making special provisions for Ruth. Boaz also gives Ruth extra status by advising her to stay with his maidservants.

But, again, love at first sight is not in the picture here, Hollywood movies notwithstanding. We cannot infer more than that Boaz is making extra provision for a member of the family.

He cares for her as one of the family. She will be able to glean enough during the barley and wheat harvests to provide for herself and Naomi for many months.

Topic: CHRISTIAN AT WORK

### BOAZ

The book of Ruth gives us an intimate look at social and family life in Judea during the time of the Judges. It is always profitable to meditate on a narrative like this, with the objective of seeing what examples of grace thinking and behavior we can see.

Try to think of Boaz living under the obligations of taxation and care of the poor. What would his attitude have been toward tithing? What would his thinking been when faced with the social obligation to provide for the needs of poor,

landless people? Read the article on Levitical sacrifices to get an idea of Boaz' obligations.

### Topic: LEVITICAL SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS

Boaz would have had to give 10% of the harvest he was gathering to the priests; in some years it would have been 20% or more.

He would already have given a first-fruits offering - determined solely by his own generosity, since the amount was not specified.

Then, even though his taxes and offerings might have been as much as 30%, he was expected to leave grain in the field for gleaners!

Note: He would not tithe on what was left in the field for gleaning. Ruth and Naomi would tithe on that - 10% of six ephahs is 0.6 ephahs.

Boaz was very gracious; and I can't imagine Boaz whining about having to pay tithes. He seemed to be a man who understood that God had to prosper him first before he would have anything to pay taxes with.

Bethlehem had recently been through a desperate famine. It's likely that Boaz went for years with very low taxes to pay, because of the very meager harvests. He would have been glad to pay high taxes.

Remember - Naomi had heard in Moab that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. I don't think she said "Well, that just means that taxes are going up in Judea!" No - she got herself and Ruth back to Bethlehem as soon as she could - it was the place of provision for them

### Ruth 2:9

**Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art thirsty, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.**

-The women workers were probably those who tied the bundles into sheaves, while the men would do the reaping with scythe and sickle. The men and women worked in the fields



together because of the urgency of getting the job done.

Boaz also arranges for Ruth's protection. The other gleaners might be inclined to resent Ruth's being given such privileges and might repulse her if she came too close to the harvesters. Ruth might also be exposed to rude talk and even mishandling. However, Boaz guarded against this possibility by his instructions. As an employer, he has taken an iron stand against bad behavior, as a protection for the women workers.

Boaz' kindness does not stop here, however. Ruth is invited to drink water from the jugs the young men have filled at the well. This water was probably carried from the town, or there may have been water nearby. Valuable time would be lost if Ruth had to draw her own water; so Boaz was offering her this additional kindness.

#### Ruth 2:10

**Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou should take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?**

Bowing to the ground was a token of gratitude and humility. Ruth recognized that Boaz was doing more than was strictly required, and she was grateful accordingly. She was content to take a place among his servants; she did not presume on his kindness. Yet she wonders why Boaz is showing such kindness, especially to a foreigner.

#### Ruth 2:11

**And Boaz answered and said unto her, It has been fully showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of your husband: and how thou hast left thy father and mother, and the land of thy nativity, and are come unto a people which you knew not heretofore.**

Ruth has left everything to follow the Lord. There is often a tremendous wrenching away from the past that a believer faces when he

commits himself to the Lord. Some tough decisions have to be made in many areas of life.

Decision breaks may have to be made with family, friends, religion, social life, career, and the pursuit of wealth and the good life. One's activities in Christian service will take up time which would have been devoted to self improvement. All of this requires a sacrificial attitude and resolute determination.

Read Luke 5:10-18

Phil. 3:8, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ.

#### Ruth 2:12

**The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.**

This verse is a sort of prayer, spoken to Ruth, but with the acknowledgment that the recompense, the reward, are from Jehovah.

Boaz knows that faith in God always has a full reward. He is a mature man in the sense of Titus 2:2. He is "sound in faith" because of years of experience in trusting the Lord and seeing God keep His promises

So Boaz does not hesitate to tell Ruth that she has done the right thing in trusting Jehovah.

Topic: FAITH

Read 1 John 3:16-19

Read James 2:15-18

Boaz knows that his prosperity has come from God; and he knows that the Lord will supply his needs in the future. He does not have to hoard all his money and goods to be sure to have a good retirement, so he can be a channel of grace blessing.

Read Proverbs 11:24-26

See also Prov. 13:20,21; Luke 14:12-14; Psalm 36:7,8; 41:1; 57:1; 63:6,7; Prov. 3:9,10; Isa. 58:10; Matt. 23:37.

#### Ruth 2:13

**Then she said, Let me find favor in your sight, my lord: for that you have comforted me, and for that you have spoken friendly unto your handmaid, though I be not like unto one of your handmaidens.**

Ruth is astonished, and very happy! This is the first cheerful thing that has happened to Ruth since she first appeared as a widow in Moab. Ruth remembers that she is a foreigner, a stranger among the other servant women.

#### Ruth 2:14

**And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was satisfied, and left.**

The parched grain consisted of fresh ears taken from the new barley crop and roasted in a pan. Or, as described by W. M. Thompson...

A quantity of the best ears are plucked with the stalks attached. These are tied into small parcels. A blazing fire is kindled with dry grass and thorn bushes, and the grain is held in it until most of the chaff is burned off. The grain is roasted enough to be eaten.

Ruth's place beside the reapers shows that she was an accepted member of the group now. This place of some honor was more than just a courteous gesture, however, for the context indicates that she had plenty to eat, with quite a quantity left over, as verse 18 shows.

Note: the verb "reached" is unusual. It may have something to do with the preparation of the food; and it may mean to "heap up" a portion in the serving of food.

#### Ruth 2:15, 16

**And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not?**

**And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.**

These directions went considerably beyond the normal generosity and compassion Boaz might have shown to any poor person. Now that he knows who Ruth is, he has a particular interest in her. As we see in this passage, he was well acquainted with her loyal support of Naomi and with her love of the God of Israel.

The young men were instructed to allow her to glean among the harvested sheaves themselves, which usually would have been forbidden to gleaners. Gleaners were supposed to go over the fields only after the reapers had finished their work. Boaz was going beyond the legal rights of gleaners.

But he goes even farther (v.16). The Hebrew word for "bundles" is rendered "handfuls" here. Perhaps the bundles had not been tied yet. Boaz tells his servants that he wants Ruth to be able to gather grain from the harvested crop, and that she is not to be reprimanded.

#### Ruth 2:17

**So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.**

When Ruth finished the day's work, she knocked out the grain from the barley ears. She would have gathered up the grain itself into her garment. She had 20 to 25 pounds of grain (1 ephah = 4 gallons English). This is a great deal of grain for one day's gleaning. Two things are apparent: Boaz' servants had obeyed him, and Ruth had worked hard all day.

#### Ruth 2:18

**And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave**

**to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.**

Ruth took the results of her labor into Bethlehem and to her home, and she showed Naomi what she had gleaned.

She also produced the food that she had saved after having finished the midday meal and gave it to Naomi. Nothing goes to waste in this frugal economy. It is likely that Boaz, in "reaching her parched corn" was deliberately making provision for Naomi from the noon rations.

**Ruth 2:19, 20**

**And her mother in law said unto her. Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz.**

**And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsman.**

Naomi must have been astonished at the amount of grain that Ruth had brought home. She conjectured that Ruth had been working for a generous landowner, and she praises the man for his generosity, whoever he was.

Then, of course, Ruth told Naomi that she had worked in Boaz' field, whereupon all is clear to Naomi. This news causes Naomi to break out in praise of God, and it is at this point that the seed of the plan is planted that Naomi will put into action in chapter 3.

Naomi speaks of God's care for the living, herself and Ruth, and the dead, Elimelech and his sons, whom Jehovah cares for by making provision for their widows through Boaz. And Naomi prays that Jehovah will bring honor to Boaz for his gracious care for his relatives.

Note: the Hebrew scholars acknowledge that the construction "who has not left off his kindness" could have as antecedent either "he", Boaz, or

"the Lord". The sense of this passage seems to favor the latter, that it is Jehovah who is the ultimate provider for them.

**Ruth 2:21-23**

**And Ruth the Moabite said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.**

**And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.**

**So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of the barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.**

Ruth continues her report to Naomi, that Boaz had invited her to glean exclusively in his fields until the end of all harvesting.

Naomi was very satisfied with the arrangement, which was probably far more than she expected, especially considering her frame of mind when she first returned from Moab. She advised Ruth to continue working in Boaz' fields, which she did. And it was during this period, perhaps late in the harvest season, that the events of chapter 3 took place.

## **Ruth, Chapter 3**

**Ruth 3:1**

**Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?**

The book of RUTH now moves towards its climax, the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. Naomi takes some thought about Ruth's future and arranges things with the result that the marriage eventually takes place.

There is only a small amount of other source material which deals with the peculiar events described. But this record is from the Word of God, so we are at least certain that it is genuine.

We may suppose, however, that this was not a unique happening.

Naomi says "shall I not seek rest for you", which means "I want to see you settled in life." The two women have a precarious position in life; the position of unprotected widows in the ancient world was usually very hard. And gleaning is at best a haphazard livelihood only meant to be temporary. So Naomi looks for something better.

This is amplified by the phrase "that it may be well with thee": Ruth's marriage would certainly change both their lives for the better.

### Ruth 3:2

**And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnows barley tonight in the threshing floor.**

Naomi introduces the next logical step. Boaz was technically Elimilech's kinsman, therefore Naomi's by marriage. He was Ruth's kinsman in a more remote way.

Threshing was often done in late afternoon and evening, when a wind might arise to separate chaff from grain. The threshing floors of Palestine were made in an open area, outdoors, of level places stamped down to make them hard.

Ruth had been working with his servants, in fact she has received marks of special favor from Boaz. So the man to whom they are going to appeal is known to be of good character and generous. He is a principled man

I have unanswered questions here. Perhaps a reader can supply some answers for me.

Why did Naomi not make application to the nearer kinsman who is identified in chapter 4? She surely knew the other man; Bethlehem is simply too small a community for her not to have known the nearer kinsman.

Was she aware of the impediment to marriage with the other kinsman (see Ruth 4:6)? Did she expect Boaz to be a better risk? Or did she

expect Boaz to persuade the other kinsman to do his part?

[I attribute the following comments regarding legal aspects of life among the Jews to Keil and Delitzsch, "Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume II", p. 481 ff. I have paraphrased the section, omitting some parts. wd]

Certain legal relations came into consideration here. According to the laws of the theocracy, Jehovah was the actual owner of the land which He had given to His people for an inheritance. The Israelites merely had the use of the land which had been given them for an inheritance. The existing possessor of the a portion of land could not part with it or sell it, but it was to remain in his family forever.

When anyone was obliged to sell his land, such as by reason of poverty, it was the duty of the nearest relation to redeem it. But even if it should not be redeemed, it came back, in the next year of jubilee, to its original owner, or heirs, without compensation.

No actual sale took place in our sense of the word. A sale was actually just a lease, or the sale of the yearly produce of the land until the year of jubilee.

See Leviticus 25:10-28.

There was also an old customary practice, which had received the sanction of God through the Mosaic law, of Levirate marriage, or the marriage of a brother-in-law. Genesis 38.

That is, if an Israelite who had been married died without children, it was the duty of his brother to marry the widow, his sister-in-law, that he might establish his brother's name in Israel by begetting a son who should take the name of the deceased brother, that the name should not become extinct in Israel.

This son was then the legal heir of the landed property of the deceased uncle.

Deuteronomy 25.

The Law imposed this obligation upon the living brother, but it allowed him to renounce the obligation if he would take on himself the

disgrace connected with such a refusal (Deut. 25:7-10).

The Mosaic Law does not connect these two institutions, but it was very natural to place the Levirate duty in connection with the right of redemption. And this had become the traditional custom.

#### The Kinsman-Redeemer

According to the laws regarding punishment and retribution for crime, when a person was assaulted, robbed or murdered, it fell to the nearest kinsman to bring the criminal to justice and to protect the lives and property of relatives. This obligation was called "redeeming", and the man who was responsible for fulfilling this duty was known as a "redeemer" (Heb. go-el). The job of redeemer would fall to full brothers first, then to uncles who were the father's brothers, then to full cousins, and finally to the other blood relatives of the family (Lev. 25:48). The kinsman-redeemer of the Old Testament was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer. There were four requirements for the redeemer, both in the type and in Christ:

1. The redeemer must be a near kinsman. To fulfill this Christ took on human form.
2. The redeemer must be able to redeem. The price of man's redemption was the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
3. The redeemer must be willing to redeem (Heb. 10:4-10). Christ was willing to be our Redeemer.
4. The redeemer must be free from that which caused the need for redemption; that is, the redeemer cannot redeem himself. This was true of Christ, because He needed no redemption.

READ Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-11.

The nation of Israel as a whole required a Redeemer to redeem the lands which had been taken over by foreign powers, so they looked to Jehovah to become their go-el. The period of exile gave an even greater force and meaning to the term "redeemer" than it had before; and the book of Isaiah contains nineteen of the thirty-

three Old Testament references to God as Israel's covenant redeemer.

Topic: REDEMPTION

#### Ruth 3:3

**Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.**

Naomi instructs Ruth as to her preparations; she is to look her best. Her best clothes would be none too fancy. But it appears they were able to afford a little perfume, as the word "anoint" indicates.

Some commentators note that a large mantle would have been included in this clothing. This is quite likely, because we know that she was able to carry home a large amount of grain which Boaz gave to her; and grain was often carried in a mantle which would be formed a bag for carrying things.

#### Ruth 3:4-6

**And it shall be, when he lies down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.**

**And she said unto her, All that thou sayest to me I will do.**

**And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.**

Ruth is to remember where Boaz lies down so that she can later go and lie down at his feet. Maybe she was to uncover his feet so that he would wake up when they got cold. In any case, the position at his feet is the lowly one a petitioner would take.

The whole action represents Ruth's request to Boaz that he act the part of a kinsman to her.

Commentators are agreed that Ruth has marriage with Boaz in mind, although Naomi must have told her by now of the nearer kinsman. Maybe

she was aware of the other kinsman's problem and that Boaz would end up being the correct man to approach. That would make Boaz' subsequent legal dealings with the kinsman just a formality; but perhaps the formality was required in any case.

Why this particular method of approach we don't know. The symbol of Boaz mantle being place over Ruth is not uncommon; there is a lot of symbology in the Bible taken from clothing. Throwing the garment over the woman might have signified claiming her as wife.

Ruth's simple reply shows her trust in Naomi and submission to her. Ruth is perfectly in tune with the plan of God. She honors her parent. She is aware of the channel of divine guidance provided through established family authority. She knows that the place of blessing is found in submission.

This story provides examples of how well the Israelites understood principles what had been instituted by God. The first example we have is in Naomi and Ruth's refusal to appeal for charity but to work for a living even though they had rich relatives.

The second example is that Ruth, although a grown woman, listened to Naomi's advice and followed it.

### Ruth 3:7

**And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.**

This section of Ruth tells how Ruth carried out the instructions of Naomi, and how Boaz received her. Boaz is shown quietly handling the situation like a gentleman. He is neither an old fool nor a country bumpkin. He has dignity and restraint. He does not appear to be shocked, although he was startled to be awakened like this in the middle of the night.

At harvest time people would camp out. Boaz would have had a place to himself, with his servants sleeping at other places in the vicinity.

The word "softly" means "quietly". It was used of David when he stole in and cut a piece from Saul's robe (1 Samuel 24:4). The narrative does not say that she waited for a time before going close to Boaz, but she must have, because Boaz was asleep when she came.

### Ruth 3:8,9

**And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.**

**And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.**

Boaz was startled by something, so he turned, or bent over, and saw Ruth lying at his feet.

In reply to Boaz' question, Ruth identifies herself as a maidservant, again taking a lowly position. She acts toward Boaz in humility. And she looks for Boaz to take action because of who she is.

Ruth uses a very expressive metaphor here in asking him to spread his skirt over her. The word "skirt" here is in the plural, and in such a case it more often means "wings" than part of a garment. It may be that Ruth was saying "spread thy wings over thy handmaid", a very beautiful and delicate way for Ruth to express her wish.

She calls Boaz GO-EL, "near kinsman". This makes her request a formal one, and she's looking to him to resolve the legal question of redemption.

Keil and Delitzsch say that the word "skirt" refers to the corner of the counterpane, or blanket, which Boaz had over him. A man and wife sleeping together would share this blanket. Therefore, in those times, the act of covering Ruth with part of the blanket would have been symbolic of a proposal of marriage.

However, Boaz did not take this action. As we see further on, there was a legal question to be resolved before Boaz could marry Ruth. But Boaz does begin the process here which eventually leads to their marriage.

**Ruth 3:10**

**And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.**

Boaz reply is immediate and positive. He calls down blessing on her; he thinks that Ruth has shown more kindness now than when she first came to the fields. The earlier kindness was that shown by Ruth in not leaving Naomi and in gleaning to provide for their needs. To this she has now added a further evidence of her regard for family relationships.

Ruth has not followed natural inclinations but has shown a responsible attitude to the family in looking to her GO-EL for marriage. Boaz was certain she could have married some other eligible young man in Bethlehem; but she did not let these types of personal inclinations rule her.

Comment: Headlong and headstrong decisions usually lead to sorrow.

Single men and women are well advised to wait for God's definite leading in matters of marriage. There are Bible principles and mechanics which, when understood and used properly, will allow God to bring about His will in marriage.

This passage illustrates very vividly and emphatically the benefits of following God's plan and waiting for God's leading.

A thoughtful mother will tell her daughter, "Wait for the young man to call you!"

Daughter: "But he won't call; then what will I do?"

Mother: "Then you don't have a date. It's not God's will; God knows that either you're not ready for him, or he's not God's choice for you right now."

Daughter: "But, what if he doesn't call ... what if nobody calls?"

Mother: "Then, you wait..."

Daughter: "But God is too slow. I don't want to wait..."

Mother: "If you don't wait for God's leading, you will suffer the consequences."

Bill Gothard, "Institutes for Basic Youth Conflicts", says:

You are old enough to date when you have achieved the following three prerequisites:

1. When you are aware of both the benefits and the dangers of dating.
2. When you have personally worked out from Scripture a set of dating standards.
3. When you have purposed that you will not lower these standards, even if it means losing dates.

Topic: PURITY in the Christian Life

**Ruth 3:11**

**And now, my daughter, fear not: I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.**

Boaz tells Ruth not to be afraid, or anxious about the future; for he will do all that she says. He gives as his reason that Ruth has an excellent reputation. She is well known to all the townspeople. The word "city" is literally "gate", the usual place of public assembly, the place for business, judgment, and receiving news.

The word "virtuous" is the same as was translated "wealth" in Ruth 2:1 where Boaz was introduced. It denotes ability, reputation, courage, attainment, as well as integrity of character, or virtue. It is a word for comprehensive excellence. This word is used for the ideal woman of Proverbs 31 (31:10), and of her who is a "crown to her husband" (Prov. 12:4).

These qualities in the Christian life are a product of a person's love for the Lord and willingness to wait for and follow God's leading.

Topic: OCCUPATION WITH CHRIST

Topic: SEPARATION

**Ruth 3:12,13**

**And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.**

**Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning.**

Boaz affirms that he certainly is a kinsman; but he goes on to point out that there was a man nearer of kin than he. It seems unlikely that Naomi did not know this, although Ruth may have been unaware of the complexities of the family relationships and the legal implications.

There was a due order in these matters. In Deut. 25:5-10, it is the brother that is to marry the widow, and no mention is made of anyone else. If fact, the widow can humiliate him publicly if he refuses to perform his duty.

It would appear to be a matter of common sense, however, to allow for someone else in the family to perform this duty if the brother were incapacitated. The next of kin had the privilege and responsibility, and only if he declined was it possible (and necessary) for another member of the family to take his place.

Boaz saw nothing wrong with Ruth's coming to him. He thought of it as natural and right, and as soon as he had got over his surprise, he dealt with matters in a straightforward manner. He was ready to carry out her wish as soon as circumstances would legally allow it. And he made her a solemn promise to do so.

Topic: REDEMPTION

Boaz makes plain the order of things. He tells Ruth to stay where she is until morning, since she will be perfectly safe there until light of day. As it turns out, she didn't stay until daylight, but rose and left "before one could know another."

**Ruth 3:14**

**And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.**

Ruth resumes her place at Boaz' feet until the morning. We don't know whether she was able to sleep, or lay awake the rest of the night. She was on her way before daylight.

What Ruth had done conformed to known custom; Boaz had no need to explain to others what she was doing, if anyone had noticed. Nevertheless, there were obvious reasons why it should not be published abroad that Ruth had been there that night. There was protection for Ruth's reputation; and there was the question of privacy for the transaction until time to make it a public issue (chapter 4).

There is no question of impropriety here. In fact, it is likely that if Boaz and Ruth had been suspected of wrongdoing, that according to Jewish law they could not have been married.

Morris quotes a portion of the Mishnah, Yeb. 2:8, that states if a man was suspected of having intercourse with a Gentile woman he could not perform levirate marriage with her. In its written form, this regulation is centuries later than the book of Ruth. But if it derived from ancient custom, it would have given Boaz added reason to exercise caution.

**Ruth 3:15**

**Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid in on her: and she went into the city.**

Boaz does not want Ruth to go back empty-handed; so he provides her with another generous gift of grain. The amount mentioned is, literally, "six of barley", with no unit of measure given.

She had carried home an EPHAH previously, on the day she first gleaned in Boaz' field. That was about 40 pounds. Six OMER of grain would have been about 2.5 gallons, or 28 pounds, so



it's possible that was the measure. Or Boaz might just have used whatever scoop he had nearby to put some grain in her shawl.

### Ruth 3:16-18

**And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done unto her.**

**And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty to thy mother in law.**

**Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.**

When Ruth returned home that morning, Naomi asked her "Who art thou?" Since she obviously knows Ruth, Naomi is undoubtedly asking about the results of the petition to Boaz, so that the question is "What are your circumstances?" or "What have you accomplished?" The question in Hebrew expects information about the condition of the person, rather than just identification.

Naomi would also have been encouraged to see another gift of grain from Boaz, which would mean that Boaz certainly would carry out the matter to the end they wanted. Boaz had said "Go not empty to your mother in law". Remember that Naomi said that "the Lord had brought me home again empty" (Ruth 1:21). Now, Naomi's empty days were over.

"Sit still..." This is advice to trust God and wait for Him to bring about His plan (Faith-Rest).

This confidence in Boaz is based on knowledge of his mature character, and of his ability to carry out what he had promised. He made no empty promises. He had the legal stature, the authority, and the substance to provide for everything. Boaz is in view here as the redeemer, in type, the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ who first redeems the soul and then the body in the resurrection.

As in Titus 2:13, we are "waiting with keen anticipation..." for the appearing of Jesus Christ, and our hope is based on the character of God

who has promised and will deliver. Likewise, Naomi has confidence in Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, to carry out his promise.

Topic: PROMOTION

## Ruth, Chapter 4

### Ruth 4:1

**Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat down there, and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by, unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! Turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.**

This very colorful description is one of the few documents from the ancient world which describe how a legal process of this kind was carried out. Boaz first move was to go up to the gate of the town of Bethlehem and sit down there.

The gate of a town or village played a large part in the cities of Judah in these times. Excavations reveal that cities in Palestine were very closely built, with no large open spaces like the Roman forum or the Greek agora. There was some space at the gate for people to gather and do business, and the gate was the center of city life.

The gate was the place for any important assembly, but it was primarily for legal business. For example, the kings of Judah and Israel sat on thrones "in the entrance of the gate of Samaria" (1 Kings 22:10). Similarly, King Zedekiah sat "in the gate of Benjamin" (Jer. 38:7).

When Absalom wanted to take advantage of the way justice was administered, he "rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate; and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, that Absalom called unto him..." (You can satisfy your curiosity about what happened next by reading 2 Samuel 15.) :-)

The gate was the place to find the men with whom you had to do business. Amos speaks of "him that rebukes in the gate," and of the unjust judges who "take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right." And he exhorts the people, "Hate the evil, and love the

good, and establish judgment in the gate."  
(Amos 5:10-15)

People were condemned before the elders of the city "in the gate", Deut. 22:15. The gate is mentioned in connection with executions (Deut. 22:24). And it is seen as a supreme tragedy when "the elders have ceased from the gate." (Lam. 5:14)

In Deut. 15, when a man refused to marry the widow of his brother, the woman was bidden to "go up to the gate unto the elders" to begin the process of public humiliation of the offender.

So - Boaz was in the right place to conduct legal business.

The phrase "ho, such a one" is a form of direct address without using the person's name. The author of RUTH is aware that Boaz knew the man he was addressing, but he either didn't know the man's name, or he thought it was irrelevant. The phrase is also found in 1 Sam. 21:2 and 2 Kings 6:8.

#### Ruth 4:2

**And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.**

The idea here was to gather a sort of jury to hear the transaction and exercise some kind of judicial function.

In Joshua 24, if a man fled from "the avenger of blood" to one of the cities of refuge, it was the elders who determined whether he was to be admitted. And when Jezebel wanted Macbeth executed in a judicial manner, it was the elders she forced into taking the necessary action (1 Kings 21:8,11).

Elders had far-reaching powers. In this case, the matter was relatively minor, and the elders really had little to do or decide. But any transaction that was witnessed by the elders, and attested to by them, was of absolute validity.

I couldn't find any information about why there were ten elders chosen. In later times, ten men were required for a synagogue service, and some

commentators suggest that ten is a quorum, but for such an old custom, there is little to go on.

#### Ruth 4:3,4

**And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, who is come again out of the country of Moab, select a plot of land, which was our brother Elimelech's.**

**And I thought to advertise you, saying, Buy it before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it beside thee, and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.**

Boaz addresses the kinsman and informs him that Elimelech, who was related to both of them, owned some land near Bethlehem, and that the land had to be redeemed in Naomi's favor.

We are not told how the land might have changed hands over the years; it may be that Elimelech sold the land to someone just before he took his family to Moab. Nevertheless, the title to the land would have stayed with Elimelech's family, and such a purchase would have been equivalent to a leasehold or rent. If this is the case, to redeem the land at this time would have required a payment to the occupant for the balance of his lease. The fact that Naomi was in Moab ten years suggests that some arrangement like this was in place to allow legal use of the land during Elimelech's absence.

Upon Elimelech's death, the ownership of the land would have passed to his sons. Numbers 27:8-11 shows very clearly the sequence of inheritance: first, sons; then, daughters; then, brothers; then, uncles; then, the next nearest kinsman. The widow is not mentioned in the line of inheritance!

Although the law did not provide for a widow to inherit, apparently this law was not rigidly enforced. ["Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws", Longmans, 1944] For we see here that Naomi had legal rights to the land and could realize some money from it. But Ruth was the widow of Mahlon and would have had similar rights.

Verse 4 makes it clear that the kinsman is the nearer relative and Boaz is the next directly in line.

The kinsman is quite ready to buy the land and is prepared to come up with the money. At this point, however, he is not aware of a slight complication. :-)

#### Ruth 4:5

**Then said Boaz, What day thou buys the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.**

The following quotation is from "Commentary on the Old Testament", Volume 2, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, p. 489ff.

"The question arises, what right had Naomi to sell her husband's land as her own property? ... The true explanation is no doubt the following: The law relating to the inheritance of the landed property of Israelites who died childless did not determine the time when such a possession should pass to the relatives of the deceased, whether immediately after the death of the owner, not until after the death of the widow who was left behind.

"No doubt the latter was the rule established by custom, so that the widow remained in possession of the property as long as she lived; and for that length of time she had the right to sell the property in case of need, since the sale of a field was not an actual transfer of title but simply the sale of the yearly produce until the year of jubilee.

"The field of the deceased Elimelech would, strictly speaking, have belonged to his sons, and after their death to Mahlon's widow (Ruth), since Chilion's widow had remained behind in her own country Moab. But as Elimelech had not only emigrated with his wife and children and died abroad, but his sons had also been with him in the foreign land, and had married and died there, the landed property of their father had not descended to them, but had remained the property of Naomi, Elimelech's widow, in which Ruth, as the widow of Mahlon, also had a share.

"Now, in case a widow sold the field of her deceased husband for the time that it was in her possession, on account of poverty, and a relation of her husband redeemed it, it was evidently his duty not only to care for the maintenance of the impoverished widow, but if she were still young, to marry her, and to let the first son born of such a marriage enter into the family of the deceased husband of his wife, so as to inherit the redeemed property, and perpetuate the name and possession of the deceased in Israel.

"Upon this right, which was founded upon traditional custom, Boaz based this condition, which he set before the nearer redeemer, that if he redeemed the field of Naomi he must also take Ruth, with the obligation to marry her, and through this marriage to set up the name of the deceased upon his inheritance."

#### Ruth 4:6

**And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance. Redeem thou my right for thyself; for I cannot redeem it.**

The fact that marriage with Ruth must accompany the redemption of the field changed the whole picture for the kinsman. He does not say "I will not redeem", as if he were refusing. Rather he says, "I cannot redeem," indicating that there is an impediment to the transaction.

It is not clear what prevented the kinsman from fulfilling his obligation. He was ready to buy the field without marrying Ruth, but he couldn't do both.

One possibility is that he did not want to marry a Moabite woman. That would have been understandable, and it probably would not have been held against him.

Another reason is that paying for the land and taking on the responsibility for caring for Ruth and Naomi would have involved a considerable expense. He would pay for the land, but the land would stay with Naomi's family. So his own family would suffer the loss of some of their own inheritance. And the kinsman may already have been married and not wanted to have a second wife.

Whatever the reason, the kinsman was emphatic about it, even repeating his statement so there would be no doubt.

#### Ruth 4:7,8

**Now this was the manner in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor; and this was a testimony in Israel.**

**Therefore, the kinsman said unto Boaz, But it for thyself. So he drew off his shoe.**

The author of Ruth uses the word "formerly" to describe this custom, indicating that by the time of writing the ceremony of drawing off the shoe was no longer practiced.

From Keil and Delitzsch, "The custom itself, which existed among the Indians and the ancient Germans, arose from the fact that fixed property was taken possession of by treading upon the soil, and hence taking off the shoe and handing it to another was a symbol of the transfer of a possession or right of ownership.

See Deut. 11:24.

In this case, there was only a symbolic transfer of the rights to purchase a property, not a transfer of the land itself. The act of handing over the shoe to Boaz was undoubtedly designed to indicate visually to the elders that a formal agreement had been reached.

#### Ruth 4:9, 10

**And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are my witnesses this day, that I have bought all that Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.**

**Moreover Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place. Ye are witnesses this day.**

Here Boaz begins his speech to the elders primarily, and to the people as witnesses. The witness of both groups is important, as we see also in later verses (4:11). That is, the people are not just bystanders, but participants and perhaps legal witnesses, as well.

The phrase "I have bought" should be taken in the sense of acquiring something by legal means. Boaz is establishing his full right to the family possession, not only Elimelech's property, but that of both sons also. There is a question as to how Chilion comes into the picture; after all Boaz was not marrying Orpah. Perhaps since Chilion likewise will not have an heir, his name would die out and his claim to a share in the property would pass to Mahlon's heir.

In buying the field, Boaz has also obtained Ruth to be his wife. He did not purchase Ruth in the sense of buying a bride or obtaining chattel. She is the natural and ordinary accompaniment to the legal process of maintaining the inheritance of Elimelech.

Boaz says he will "raise the name of the dead upon his inheritance", that is, to provide a son who would carry on the name of the deceased. Then he states the same proposition in the negative, "that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place." The "brethren" are all the relations of the family of Elimelech (and Mahlon and Chilion).

The "gate of his place" is most likely the gate of the town of Bethlehem. As we can see, the gate is the center of social and community life, so this is the same as saying that the name of the deceased would be perpetuated in the community.

Boaz concludes by reminding his hearers that they are all witnesses.

#### Ruth 4:11,12

**And all the people who were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman who is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of**

**Israel, and do thou worthily in Ephratah,  
and be famous in Bethlehem.**

**And let thy house be like the house of  
Pharez, whom Tamar bore unto Judah, of  
the seed which the Lord shall give thee of  
this young woman.**

The court session ends with a statement from all the witnesses, the people and the elders. First, they affirm that they are indeed witnesses. This seems very much like jury proceedings in which the jury announces a decision. Clearly, here, the people's part is more than a formality; in fact, they are mentioned before the elders in this verse.

Then the people continue by pronouncing a blessing on Boaz and Ruth. They first pray that Ruth will be fruitful. And it is interesting, that although they are citizens of Bethlehem, and thus descended from Judah, son of Leah (Gen. 29:35), the place Rachel before Leah. Rachel was specially beloved, and she had died in the near neighborhood of Bethlehem. Since the entire nation of the Jews is considered to have descended from Rachel and Leah, this prayer is that Ruth and Boaz will have a numerous and distinguished family of descendants.

The Boaz is addressed in the phrase "do thou worthily in Ephratah", an expression of hope for Boaz' prosperity in the broad sense. The word translated "worthily" here is the same as seen in Ruth 2:1 and translated "of wealth". It points to excellence in almost any field, with perhaps some emphasis on military prowess. But in this setting the stress is on wealth and prosperity rather than military eminence.

The phrase "be famous in Bethlehem" speaks of the consequences of this; the well-wishers trust that Boaz and Ruth will be renowned as a result of his sterling actions here.

The reference to Pharez is curious, because Pharez is not usually regarded as an example of fruitfulness. But there are connections. Pharez was the one that "Tamar bore unto Judah". The account is seen in Genesis 38, and the story must be relevant because of the similarity of Tamar's situation to Ruth's.

Also, we must remember that Pharez was very likely the most important of Judah's sons; and least he is mentioned more often than Shelah, who was older. And though Pharez, as a twin, was not marked with the red cord signifying first-born, he "came out first" (Gen. 38:28 ff). The tribe of Judah apparently depended more on Pharez' descendants than those of others.

Also, Pharez is mentioned as one of Boaz' ancestors (Ruth 4:18-21); and Pharez seems to have been the ancestor of Bethlehemites in general (1 Chron. 2:5,18, 50 f). Moreover, Pharez gave his name to the tribe of Judah that was descended from him (Num. 26:20).

#### **Ruth 4:13**

**So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife;  
and when he went in unto her, the Lord  
gave her conception, and she bore a son.**

Boaz and Ruth were married very soon after the events at the gate of the city, probably within days. Note that the child born is regarded as God's gift. The will and the work of God is apparent in all portions of this book.

#### **Ruth 4:14-16**

**And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed  
by the Lord, who hath not left thee this  
day without a kinsman, that his name  
may be famous in Israel.**

**And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy  
life, and nourisher of thine old age; for  
thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who  
is better to thee than seven sons, hath  
borne him.**

**And Naomi took the child, and laid him in  
her bosom, and became nurse unto him.**

It is interesting that Naomi is featured in the closing scene, rather than Ruth. The women of Bethlehem greeted Naomi on her return from Moab. They come to her now probably because she is an old friend and neighbor, and they know her much better than they know Ruth. Also, Ruth has a husband and child to occupy her, but Naomi is free to socialize.

Again, note that the women give the chief praise to the Lord Who has worked "all things after the counsel of his own will". "Blessed be the Lord" is the usual way to express thankfulness. One of the old Jewish prayer forms, is known as "The Eighteen Benedictions" because each prayer begins with the phrase "Blessed art Thou, O Lord." It is basic to the author of Ruth that God is over all men and all things, and that He brings His plans to pass.

In speaking of the kinsman that Naomi now has, it becomes clear that the women are speaking of the new baby boy, "thy daughter-in-law ... hath borne him." Boaz, of course, the Naomi's kinsman also, and served as kinsman-redeemer, but God sent the child to be Naomi's kinsman as well.

That his name may be famous in Israel" is the same type of prayer that the child would become famous, just as the elders and people had previously prayed for Boaz.

The women prophecy that the child will mean a great deal to Naomi, in a very practical sense. This phrase expresses great confidence in Naomi's future, and the reason is given in the next phrases. They have all seen the love which Ruth has for Naomi, it shines throughout this book. In fact, their saying that she "is better than seven sons" is the supreme tribute. Seven sons is proverbial for the perfect family (1 Samuel 2:5), so to speak of Ruth as being better than this is high praise indeed.

As you might expect, Naomi took a special interest in the baby, and she gave herself over to caring for him. She belongs to a family once more; she is loved and has a recognized place. And the baby symbolizes all of this to her.

#### Ruth 4:17

**And the women, her neighbors, gave him a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.**

This is very strange; the women of the village give the name to the new baby! It may be that the women's (and all the citizens') kindly interest

in the whole situation made Boaz and Ruth inclined to accept their suggestion for a name. Or, it's possible that local custom gave a more prominent place to friends of the family than we would imagine.

Obed" means "servant." Perhaps the women are implying that the baby will serve Naomi in the sense mentioned in previous phrases.

#### Ruth 4:18-22

**Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminidab, and Amminidab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon, and Salmon begot Boaz, and Boas begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesses, and Jesse begot David.**

The following comments are taken from A. E. Cundall and L. Morris, "Judges and Ruth", pp. 317,318, The Tyndale Press, London, 1980.

A genealogy is, to say the least of it, a curious way to end a book. The author does not tell us why he has done this, and we are left to guess. But at any rate we can make this comment. Through the book in all its artless simplicity there runs the note that God is supreme. He watches over people like Naomi and Ruth and Boaz and directs their paths. God never forgets His saving purposes. The issue of the marriage of Boaz and Ruth was to lead in due course to the great King David, the man after God's own heart, the man in whom God's purpose was so signally worked out.

These events in Moab and Bethlehem played their part in leading up to the birth of David. The Christian will think also of the genealogy at the beginning of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. He will reflect that God's hand is over all history. God works out His purpose, generation after generation. Limited as we are to one lifetime, each of us sees so little of what happens. A genealogy is a striking way of bringing before us the continuity of God's purpose through the ages. The process of history is not haphazard. There is a purpose in it all. And the purpose is the purpose of God.

My studies over the years in the Book of Ruth, and in all the peripheral topics to which the research has led me, has been one of the most fruitful and blessed of my own spiritual life. Having memorized the book many years ago, and refreshed my memory of it continuously, and having taken on the task to compile and write up these notes, I have gained a very special appreciation of the Lord's activities in our lives. The time spent has been very worthwhile.

If you have reached this far in your studies of the Word, and of Ruth, I know that you have been mightily blessed also.

If you care to, send me a note about your own thoughts about the study of Ruth.

## Topical Studies

### Agriculture in Palestine

The Israelites learned farming during their 400 years in Egypt. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been herdsmen, but the people under Moses and Joshua were mainly agrarian. They were prepared to make cultivation of the soil their main occupation in the land of promise.

The allotment of the land to tribes and families was on the understanding that all land was actually owned by Jehovah; so the soil could not be sold, given, or bequeathed to anyone outside the family except under special circumstances. The land reverted to the owner in the year of jubilee.

In a community, each portion of the land was marked off and divided according to the various products to be grown. Walls and hedges protected against animals. The land was burned off to destroy weeds. Ashes and manure were spread and the land was plowed with wooden plows pulled by oxen or donkeys. The ground was cleared of stones and thorns early in the year, and sowing among thorns was taken as a sign of a lazy farmer.

The plow was followed by men using hoes to break up the clods. In later times a harrow of sorts was used, usually in the form of a thick block of wood held down by the weight of a

stone or a man. Seed was usually sown and harrowed in at the same time.

### Crops

The principal crops of Palestine were wheat and barley. The Bible also mentions lentils, flax, cucumbers, melons, beans, etc. Hay was not used, so cattle ate barley with chopped wheat or barley straw.

The sowing of crops began after the Feast of Tabernacles (end of October, beginning of November), about when autumn rains were due. Crops for summer and fall harvest were planted in January and February.

Harvest began with barley, which ripens in Palestine two or three weeks before wheat. The law stipulated that harvest was to begin on the 16th Nisan. The month of Nisan corresponds to the period of March 15 to April 15 on our calendar.

### Events of the Month of Nisan

day event 1 Fast for Nadab and Abihu 10 Selection of paschal lamb (the lamb to be used in Passover; fast for Miriam and in memory of the scarcity of water in the wilderness 14 Paschal lamb is killed in the evening, Passover begins 15 First day of unleavened bread. After sunset a sheaf of barley is brought to the temple. 16 First fruits sheaf offered; harvest begins; from this date it is fifty days until the Feast of Pentecost. 22 Close of Passover; end of unleavened bread 26 Fast for the death of Joshua

Grain was harvested with a sickle, although it was known that grain was harvested by pulling up the roots to preserve all the straw. The cut grain was gathered in the arms, bound into sheaves, and laid in heaps to be threshed.

Threshing floors were placed in the open air, leveled and tramped hard, usually on elevated ground so that in the winnowing process the wind might carry away the chaff.

Threshing was done by oxen driven over the grain to tread out the kernels with their hooves. Sometimes machines were used made with planks which dragged across the threshing floor.

Winnowing was done in the evening when there were more breezes. The mass of chaff, straw, and grain was tossed into the air with shovels so that the chaff might be blown away. The chaff and stubble in the fields were burned. The grain was sifted and stored.

Israel owed its possession of the land to God. Its fertility was also in God's hands. The Lord made a number of provisions in the Law to care for the land.

- \* Sabbath rest was to be observed
- \* Soil was to lie fallow on the seventh year and in the 50th year
- \* It was forbidden to yoke an ox and a donkey together, since an ox was a clean animal and the donkey was ceremonially unclean.
- \* It was forbidden to sow with mingled seed or with seed on which the carcass of a forbidden animal had lain.

Request Topic: Uncleaness in the Levitical System

- \* The corners of the field were not to be reaped, and gleanings were to be left for the poor to gather
- \* The first fruits of all crops belonged to Jehovah in recognition of His being the giver of all good things.
- \* The fruit of the orchard was not eaten for the first three years. On the fourth year, the produce was consecrated to God. The first eating by men was in the fifth year.

Every facet of the everyday work of the Israelite was a teaching mechanism for divine viewpoint. The faithful Jew had the opportunity to live every moment of every day as "unto the Lord". There would then be rich fruit in the soul as well as from the soil.

### **Bethlehem-Judah**

Bethlehem-Judah is a town in Palestine, about 5 miles south of Jerusalem, at an elevation of about 2,550 feet above mean sea level. The town overlooks the highway to Hebron and Egypt.

The name "Bethlehem" probably means "house of bread" or "granary", so it was used of various

places. The name draws attention to the fertility of the region.

There are other towns named Bethlehem in Israel, the most notable other one being in the north, toward the coast, in the territory allotted to Zebulun.

The town was also called Bethlehem-Ephrata (Micah 5:2), Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1), and the City of David (Luke 2:4; 7:42)

Jacob was buried Rachel near Bethlehem. In those days the town was called Ephrath. See Gen. 35:19; 48:7. The names are sometimes combined in the Bible.

After the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, Bethlehem became part of the land allotted to Judah (Judges 17:7).

David was born in Bethlehem. He was anointed in Bethlehem by Samuel, after God had chosen him as king. David's three heroes (2 Sam. 23:15 ff) brought him water from the well at Bethlehem. The well now existing on the north side of the village is thought to be the same well.

Bethlehem-Judah was the birthplace of Jesus Christ. The male children of this region were slain by Herod, who had ordered that all males under the age of two were to be killed.

### **Blessing**

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings:"

This is a study of the New Testament word "blessing". We expect to answer the following questions:

- \* What does the word "blessing" mean?
- \* How does God bless us? What does He bless us with?
- \* What are the blessings that God gives?
- \* How do we get these blessings, and how do we make use of them?
- \* How can we be a blessing to others?

### **THE CONCEPT OF BLESSING**

There are three New Testament Greek words related directly to the English word "blessing".



(eulogeitos) is an adjective meaning "well spoken of; praised"

(eulogew) is a verb: "to speak well of; to praise; to call down God's gracious power"

(eulogia) is the noun form, meaning "praise; fine speaking"

These words show up very seldom in Greek classical writing. The concepts are Hebrew in origin, and the idea of blessing permeates the OT. The New Testament Greek words are direct translations from Hebrew. These same Greek words are used more than 400 times in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) to represent the Hebrew concepts of blessing

The concept among the Old Testament Jews was that God possesses and dispenses all blessing. Adam, Noah, the patriarchs, Moses - are all blessed by God.

Moses, in turn pronounces a parting blessing on the Twelve Tribes (Deut. 33:1 ff).

The idea of "blessing" was also closely related to the question of inheritance, passing blessing from father to son. Jacob blessed Joseph in Gen. 48:15, and Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Jacob put his right hand on Ephraim's head, although he was the younger.

In the Bible both blessing and cursing are said to be passed down through two or more generations. For example, there is the concept of the four generation curse, divine discipline for a family that is out of fellowship.

In the Christian life, the inheritance that we pass down to our children is spiritual, doctrinal.

#### DEFINITION

The problem of definition of the word "blessing" is that it is not a direct translation from the Greek. The word "blessing" is a borrowed word which has attained its present day meaning by reason of long usage, rather than by etymological accuracy.

From the World Book Dictionary:

1a. "to consecrate (a thing) by religious rite, formula, or prayer" e.g., "the bishop blessed the new church"

1b. "to make holy or sacred." e.g., "And God blessed the 7th day and sanctified it", Gen. 2:3

2. "to ask God's favor for; to commend to God's favor or protection", e.g., "God bless mommy...daddy"

3. "to wish good for; to feel grateful to"

4. "to make happy or fortunate"

5. "to praise, to glorify, to call holy"

6. "to guard or protect from evil", e.g. "God bless this house"

7. "to make the sign of the Cross over; to ward off evil"

Question: Why was the English word "blessing" chosen to represent (eulogeitos).

The answer is found in Oxford English Dictionary (OED) -> one of the world's greatest detective books.

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OED: to bless

1. "to make sacred; to hallow (something)".

"The word "bless" is from the Old Teutonic (German) bletsian, from heathen blood sacrifices. German: das Blut. English: blood.

"The meaning, then, was 'to mark (or affect in some way) with blood (or a sacrificial animal)'.

"The sense development of the word 'bless' was greatly influenced by its having been chosen (in the early English church ceremonies) to translate the Latin (benedicere) and the Greek (eulogeitos)."

(End of OED comment)

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This concurs very well with the origin of the concept of "blessing" in the Bible In the OT, the Hebrew word (baw-rahk'), meaning "to kneel", was used one way or another hundreds of times to convey the meaning of respect or adoration. You would kneel before a king in respect, or to offer thanks for something. Of course, you would kneel to God in adoration, praise, thanksgiving, supplication.

The Septuagint (LXX) translators chose the Greek (eulogeitos) to represent (baw-rahk') (more than 400 times). So, among Greek

speaking Jews, this was a common word for praise, thanksgiving, respect, etc.

Latin writers used the verb form (benedicere) to translate the Greek, preferring to offer the literal sense of the Greek.

I think they wanted a strictly English word so they could get away from the Catholic Latin expressions.

The word "bless" was not a literal translation, but it had religious overtones, and they used it even though it had come from a heathen source.

So, there was a long and varied series of associations - Jewish, heathen, Christian - to blend in the English use of the word "bless".

Therefore - "blessing" is a word which has a position in Christian vocabulary by reason of long-standing usage. But it does not directly translate (eulogeitos)!

BUT - there is a modern version which \*does\* have a direct translation, and it is to this version that I pay honor. The version is the Spanish. In Ephesians 1:3 in the Spanish, the word (bendito) is the past participle of the verb (bendecir). It means, literally, "to say good things or good words".

There is no doubt to Spanish speaking people what this word means. Decir is one of the most common Spanish words. The translators had no extra baggage from the English, so they translated directly from the Greek (via the Latin).

The English equivalent to bendición is "benediction", also from the Greek by way of Latin.

So, (eulogeitos) => benedicere => bendición => benediction => "praise"

#### BLESSING IN THE BIBLE

The word "blessing" recognizes the existence and deity of God. It tells us that we can be aware of His existence and have inner happiness because of who and what He is.

It also tell us, from the Greek, that God was thinking about us in favorable terms, that He had a mental attitude of love, grace, and mercy toward us from before the beginning of time.

Praise, or blessing, for anyone comes from a mental attitude of love and appreciation for that person. God makes an initial move toward us because of His mental attitude of love. He provides us His graciousness, His gift of salvation, His spiritual gifts, all of which are manifestations of His love toward us. He thought "good words" toward us.

He has provided all blessings for us as an expression of His love. Our response of blessing or praise toward God, and toward others, is a response from a mental attitude of appreciation.

Eph. 1:3 deals with God's initiation and our response.

Blessing begins in the mind of God (Love, Grace, "Good Words", a Frame of Reference influenced by His thinking)

...therefore, He gives us "all blessings"

...the Christian learns of these blessings through Bible study and develops a mental attitude of praise and thanksgiving, "good words" with which to express appreciation

...with these "good words" we "bless" God.

These are words of vocabulary, of thinking divine viewpoint. Blessing is not a feeling, but objective thinking based on divine viewpoint, a Frame of Reference built by knowledge of doctrine.

With edification we build the ability to think about God, which enables us to receive and enjoy blessing and to be a blessing to others.

Heb. 6:7, "For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and brings forth herbs for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God"

The most basic form of evangelism is to talk about God's blessing which are available to everyone, saved or not . **HOMEWORK:** from Acts 14:8-18, determine how Paul and Barnabas used the concept of blessing to evangelize people who were completely ignorant of God.

The idea for the hymn Showers of Blessing was taken, with good intentions, from Eze. 34:24 ff. [READ Eze. 34:24 to 31]

These are tremendous verses of promise and blessing from the hand of the Lord. There is no pleading here no wishful thinking, the blessings are already given to us, either now or in the future when prophecies are fulfilled.

We should plead to be made into showers of blessing, or rather, showers of (eulogeitos), showers of benedicere, showers of bendición, showers of "benediction", showers of "good speaking".

Study Eph. 4:29 ff on the concept of speech that ministers grace.

See also, Eph. 5, "neither foolishness ... but rather giving of thanks"

1 Pet. 3:9

Why should we not be generous? We have an enormous inheritance from our heavenly Father, enough to share with others.

James 3:10

John 7:38

We are to be fountains of blessing.

Matt. 25:34

Dan. 4:33, 34

Matt. 6:25-34

Josh. 1:7,8

Ephesians 1:3 (expanded translation) "Worthy of praise and glorification is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one who has provided us benefits and every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ:"

### **Christian in the Work Place**

Titus 2:9,10 "Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them sell in all things; not answering again; not stealing, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

These verses show in capsule form the principles which are to govern the everyday life of a Christian who is an employee and who wants to be a witness for Christ on the job.

A Christian operates on Grace principles. He is gracious. He gives evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He uses Bible techniques such as Faith-Rest, Walking in Fellowship, Occupation

with Christ, to make it through each day producing divine good.

A Christian does his job as though Christ himself were boss - "as unto the Lord." He does a more than a day's work for a day's pay. He is the first to arrive and the last to leave. He takes sick leave only when sick. He doesn't cheat on break time, lunch, etc. He works diligently, cheerfully, enthusiastically, without complaining.

Using Faith-Rest principles, a Christian trusts the Lord for salary, promotion, status. He is aware that only God knows how much prosperity he should have and when he should be promoted. He rejoices when others get ahead as evidence of the grace of God in their lives (even when they don't deserve it).

A Christian is modest, self-effacing, supportive of others, cooperative. He realizes that he is there to be used by the Lord, not only as an employee, but also as a witness for Christ.

The believer's personal life, social life, family life are happy and stable so that they enhance his work life rather than hinder him on the job.

He exercises grace principles -- recognizes fellow workers as objects of God's grace, does not bear grudges, forgives readily. Every day is a new day. He does not contribute to office gossip or politics, because he has no need to build his success on someone else's failure.

He waits patiently for the opportunity for verbal witness, which is almost certain to present itself. The stage has been set for a vital witness by his life witness which others have been able to observe.

### **Depression and the Bible**

Many Christians suffer from depression from time to time. Sometimes depression is self-induced because it is caused by sin. Mental attitude sins will bring on depression. Failure to exercise Faith-Rest principles or failure to claim promises from the Bible can cause depression. If sin is the problem, the first step to the solution is to confess sin Biblically and use the techniques of Faith-Rest, Occupation with

Christ, and the Filling of the Holy Spirit to begin a quick recovery.

Sometimes depression comes through no fault of our own. There may be severe problems which are imposed by outside circumstances. There may be physical exhaustion and a weakening of physical and emotional strength. There may be serious disturbances or distress in life with a feeling of being trapped or a fear of what might happen. If the depression is not caused by a sin problem, confession is not called for. But the techniques of the Christian way of life are equally useful in combating depression in whatever form it comes.

The dictionary defines depression as one or more of the following:

- \* A feeling of dejection or sadness
- \* An attitude of self-depreciation
- \* A reduction in quality or force
- \* A lowering of vitality or functional activity

The Bible deals extensively with the subject of mental anguish, sorrow, and depression. There are many Bible words used to describe the thoughts and feelings people have when they are depressed. Studying these definitions, and the Bible passages where they are found, is a very important part of the therapy for depression. Almost every Bible verse that has a word related to depression also has part of the cure for that condition somewhere in its context.

As you study the following verses, try to determine in each case the reasons for the state of depression and whether it was caused by personal sin (self-induced), was the result of undeserved suffering, or came from some other source. Then, try to decide on what the "cure" should have been. In some cases, the cure will show up in the context. In others you will have to decide on a solution from categorical doctrinal principles.

The Bible deals with depression categorically using the following words:

(lupei), meaning "grief, sorrow, distress, suffering, a sad plight". The verb form is (lupeo), "to cause pain, to grieve, to annoy". In military terminology, the word was used of

troops in the sense "to harass; to annoy" the enemy. In the passive voice, where the subject receives the action of the verb, the meaning is "to be sad, to be sorry, to be grieved".

"And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry." Matt. 17:22,23

"And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?" Matt. 26:22

"But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." Matt. 19:22

"And he [Jesus] took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Matt. 26:37,38

"... I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." John 16:20

"But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably." Romans 14:15

"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." 2 Cor. 2:4

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." 1 Thess. 4:13

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through many testings." 1 Peter 1:6

"Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. 12:11

"For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." 1 Peter 2:19

(adeimonia), noun, "in great distress or anguish"  
 "My soul is exceeding sorrowful...", Matt.  
 27:38. See also Mark 14:33,34

"For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick." Phil. 2:26

(anagkei), noun, "necessity, constraint, natural desire (such as hunger), bodily pain or suffering". When used with (thlipsis), signifies a condition of necessity arising from some form of outside compulsion.

Used in: Matt. 18:7; Luke 14:18; 21:23; Rom. 13:5; 1 Cor. 7:26, 37; 9:16; 2 Cor. 6:4; 9:7; 12:10; 1 Thess. 3:7; Philemon v. 14; Heb. 7:12,27; 9:16; Jude v. 3

(stenochoria), noun, "narrowness of place, a trapped feeling."

Used in: Rom. 2:9; 8:35; 2 Cor. 6:4; 12:10

(sunochai), noun, metaphorically for "anguish or distress" caused by a compressing together or narrowing of the way.

Used in: 2 Cor. 2:4; Luke 21:25

(thlipsis), noun, "pressure, oppression, affliction."

Used in: Matt. 13:21; 24:9; Mark 4:17; 13:19,24; John 16:21,33; Acts 7:10,11; 11:19; 14:22; 20:23; Rom. 2:9; 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 1 Cor. 7:28; 2 Cor. 1:4,8; 2:4; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4; 8:2; Eph. 3:13; Phil. 1:17; 4:14; Col. 1:24; 1 Thess. 1:6; 3:3,7; 2 Thess. 1:4,6; Heb. 10:33; James 1:27; Rev. 1:9; 2:9,10,22; 7:14

(kataroneo), verb, "to wear out with toil or suffering"

Used in: Acts 7:24 and 2 Peter 2:7

(sunechw), verb, "to forcibly hold together; to contain; to constrain; to oppress" Used for holding rowers together on galley ships.

Used in: Matt. 4:24, 38; 8:37; Luke 8:45; 19:43; 22:63; Acts 28:8; 7:57; 12:50; 18:5; 2 Cor. 5:14; Phil. 1:23

(odunao), verb, "to cause pain". In the passive "to feel pain".

Used in: Luke 2:48; 16:24; Acts 20:38

(thlibo), verb "to press; to distress; to trouble; to gall"

Used in: Matt. 7:14; Mark 3:9; 2 Cor. 1:6; 4:8; 7:5; 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Thess 1:6; 1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 11:37

(tarachei), noun, "trouble, disorder, confusion"

Used in: Mark 13:8; John 5:4

(tarasso), verb, "to stir up, disturb, trouble; to trouble the mind; to alarm; to frighten; to throw into disorder"

Used in : Matt. 2:3; 14:26; Mark 6:50; Luke 1:12; 24:38; 1 Peter 3:14

### Principles of Application in Dealing With Depression

The following ten principles are Bible techniques which you can use to deal with depression in your life, regardless of the cause. Each of these topics is discussed in more detail in other notes in this series, but this outline will give you ideas on how you can make specific application of categorical doctrine to help with real world problems. [ Request topics by name from: wdoud@bga.com ]

### Confession of Sin

Personal sin leads to depression. You must deal with sin on a daily basis by confessing and moving on. If you don't do this, sin becomes a burden which clouds your joy, drains your spiritual energy, and destroys your productivity and vitality. In short, sin is always depressing.

In privacy, make a list of your mental attitude sins, verbal sins, and behavior sins. Ask the Lord to make you aware of the habits of your own life. Respond immediately to the Holy Spirit when He uses the Word to spotlight your sin. Name the sin to God; then rejoice in forgiveness and cleansing and your renewed fellowship with God. All the promises and provisions of God the Father are now available to you. Make it a spiritual habit to confess sins whenever they show up in your life.

### The Filling of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit fills you and controls your life when you have no unconfessed sin in your life. You can trust the Holy Spirit to reveal sin to you when you commit it, or even before. When the Holy Spirit in control, He produces His fruit (Gal. 5:12). The fruit of the Spirit does not

include heaviness, depression, discouragement, disillusion, anguish, sadness, dejection, or loss of vitality. Consider these points:

- \* Impersonal love is free from depression.
- \* Joy pushes depression out.
- \* Peace does not coexist with disillusion in the soul of the believer filled with the Holy spirit.
- \* Longsuffering gives the ability to deal with depression and trouble.
- \* Gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance are fruits of righteousness, which is divine good. Divine good takes the place of depression.

#### Living in the Word

By Living in the Word you are constantly reminded of God's viewpoint, of His Plan, of His provision, or His awareness of our spirit of heaviness and what He wants to accomplish in us with the testing. Living in the sphere of human viewpoint is a source of depression. Living in the Word gradually transplants you to a new sphere, a new environment for your life, in which there is victory over depression.

#### Orientation to Grace

Depression is often caused by people, most of the time by people we cannot escape, or people we love, or people we cannot confront, or people we trust. Grace Orientation includes the ability to look at people and see them as God sees them. It includes the ability to let them live their lives as unto the Lord, and trusting God to make His way clear to them. This technique lets people make mistakes without your judging them. It enables you to accept criticism without hurt or bitterness. It enables you to "esteem others better than yourself", to "do nothing through strife or vainglory."

#### Occupation with Christ

The technique of Occupation with Christ helps to cure depression because it gets your eyes off your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your friends, and yourself. Instead, as you move through the day, you are thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ, His plan for your life, the Father's provision for each incident in your life, and His provision of wisdom for each decision you must

make. Occupation with Christ is a by-product of the Faith-Rest Life. Depression is a by-product of occupation with self, with life, with problems.

#### The Faith-Rest Life

Faith-Rest is believing the promises of God and then entering into the "rest" phase of Christian living by claiming and enjoying those promises. Therefore, you must search the Scriptures daily to remind yourself of promises, and to learn new ones. You must know who and what God is so that you will not hesitate to believe that He can do what He has promised to do. Study the attributes of God using verses about the Essence of God. Know Him as He reveals Himself in the Bible. Believe Him when He tells you what He will do for you. Count on it. Let your faith rest on it. Cast your burden on the Lord.

#### Relaxed Mental Attitude

A relaxed mental attitude is based on knowing God and on having the divine production in the soul that comes with the fruit of the Holy Spirit. A relaxed mental attitude is one of the results of Living in the Word, Walking in Fellowship, practicing the Faith-Rest Life, and being occupied with Christ. All of the components of depression melt away when God provides this attribute.

#### Mastering of the Details of Life

We are all involved with details of life. Either we master them, or they master us! If you are a slave to one or more details of life, your thoughts are devoted to them, and they drive you. They dominate your thoughts, your conversation, your decisions. Slavery to the details of life leads to disillusion, disappointment, and depression.

Mastery of the details of life means that you look to the Lord for every detail. Your happiness does not depend on people, circumstances or things. You have the peace of God that passes understanding. You have learned to be content under any circumstances. You can wait for the Lord's timing in providing the details you want; you can enjoy them when you have them; and you can remain happy when the Lord sees fit Not to provide some detail.

#### Capacity to Love

There may be many depressing details that surround our relationships with other people or the circumstances of our lives. The fruit of the Spirit love deals with that depression by giving us the capacity to have a Spirit-produced love for God (1 Cor. 16:22); for spouse (Titus 2:4); for others (Rom. 12:13).

### Inner Happiness

Inner happiness is not possible for the believer who is occupied with himself and his needs. Inner happiness is a state of rejoicing based on knowing that God is everything He claims to be and that He can do what He has promised. Inner happiness is the joy of living where every provision for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being is being made by God in the life of a Christian who is walking in daily fellowship with Him.

### Faith

#### Belief and believing

one of the most important considerations in the Christian way of life is the subject of the believer's faith. Several questions are always paramount in a person's thinking about faith, such as:

What is faith?

How does a person exercise faith?

How can we have stronger faith?

You will occasionally hear a person say something like this, "I don't believe anything that I can't see or feel." Or, "you really can't prove that there is a god, or that Jesus was what he claimed to be; and I'm not going to believe anything that I don't know is true!"

When a person says that he refuses to believe anything that is not proved, he ignores the fact that everyone believes unproved facts every day. If people were not willing to place their confidence in unproved facts, the whole world would grind to a halt -- no one would be able to move.

In practice, a person employs the mental process of faith dozens of times every day, just to carry out life's routines. Faith is a standard operating

procedure of human life. The discussion in this essay will show that god has made faith an integral part of human existence so that anyone in the world can have salvation and can experience Christian growth with all of its benefits and blessings.

Because bible study is, in part, a study of past events and of ancient writings, the first section of this paper is a discussion of the uses of faith in the study of history. The intention of the whole paper is, (1) to give a Christian added confidence in the use of faith, and (2) to provide a fairly thorough treatment of what the bible says about the subject. Some of the ideas herein can be used effectively in witnessing to skeptics or to those whose ideas are hazy about salvation by faith.

The second section shows how faith is used in learning bible truth, and it includes a comparison between the three systems of learning, empiricism, rationalism, and faith.

The third section deals with what the bible says about how Christian faith is developed and strengthened.

The fourth section contains an etymological study from the original Greek and Hebrew words used in the bible which are translated as "faith" or as some equivalent.

We shall see that as a mental activity Christian faith is no different from everyday faith. The unbeliever can use ordinary faith, the willingness to believe something, to accept the gospel message and obtain salvation. The believer can use faith to acquire knowledge of bible doctrine and to make application of those principles in his daily walk with the lord.

### Faith and the study of history

a person who studies the past, and who writes about it, is continually involved with the concept of faith. First, he must decide which of his sources are reliable enough to be believed, for only with credible sources can the historian have any chance of reconstructing accurately an event or social situation.

Then, the historian must express his thoughts in writing in a manner calculated not only to inform his readers but also to encourage their belief, their faith, in the propositions he sets forth. A careful student of history will have faith only in historians who meet his standards for honesty.

### The common historical bias

but there are many historians, and other people, of course, whose opinions about historical facts are colored by their religious and anti-biblical prejudices. Many people have adopted a viewpoint which makes it impossible to view historical data objectively, especially data which deals with biblical events and issues. This false viewpoint, a set of biased presuppositions, includes the following conclusions:

- \* there is no personal god.
- \* Therefore, there is no supernatural and miracles are not possible.
- \* We live in a closed system, the earth with its human race, into which no outside force can intrude, nor over which any god has control.

A skeptic holding these views approaches the study of the bible "knowing", for example, that Christ did not rise from the dead, because these things just cannot be. These conclusions themselves, however, amount to an exercise of strong faith, albeit in the wrong direction. Instead of beginning his study with the recorded historical data and an open mind, this individual precludes a balanced approach by a sort of metaphysical speculation.

### Valid historical methods

all arguments and systems begin with presuppositions (even the Christian system). This does not mean that all presuppositions that one might adopt are equally desirable. In considering any important idea, it is better to begin with presuppositions of method, which will yield truth, rather than with presuppositions of substantive content, which assume a body of truth already.

No study of the past has a right to assume a closed system of causation. Historical events are unique, and the test of their factual character can be the only acceptable documentary approach.

What does the historian do, then, when he experiences a surprise which runs counter to all his expectations, counter to his convictions, against even his culture's whole understanding of truth? Why, he must say that it is surely possible; because, for the critical historian, nothing is a priori impossible! It is not the objective of the historian to construct a history from preconceived notions and then to adjust it to his own liking, he must, rather, reproduce history from the best evidence, and let it speak for itself.

History, then, is knowledge of the past based on testimony. And the plausibility, the believability, of history depends on the trustworthiness of the witnesses, not upon the erudition of the historian.

### History and bible study

studying the bible in the 20th century involves a great deal of intense historical scholarship. One begins by placing some confidence, or faith, in early Christian witnesses and authorities. This confidence may very well be tentative at first; and one may test each hypothesis thoroughly before going deeper into study, certainly before going out on a limb by making dogmatic statements. At each decision point in study, faith must be exercised.

One does not have to prove beyond a shadow of doubt that Jesus Christ was deity. What one does is weigh the evidence, evaluate the pros and cons. The results of careful study show that Christ must be who and what he claims to be. In fact, many people have begun studying the claims of Christ, intending to refute the bible statements, only to end up confirming what they had originally set out to disprove!

A criterion of absolute truth would wipe out all knowledge, because a person could never find a place to stand to begin his study. The Christian begins by accepting the proposition that the



bible is the word of god. Then, as he learns each new doctrine, he makes decisions. First, he decides whether to believe the doctrine as he understands it. Then, he decides whether to apply the doctrine in his life through believing the teaching, by claiming the promise, or by obeying the commands given. As each new idea is tested and put into practice, it becomes part of the foundation for further learning and spiritual growth.

### **How the believer uses faith**

#### **Faith compared with empiricism and rationalism**

the biblical concept of faith is that it amounts to complete confidence in something for which there is no empirical or rational proof available. "Faith is the substance of things in which one has confidence, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11:6

A person is said to have faith in something if he has believed it without having had a physical demonstration of it or a logical explanation of the truth behind it. Saying this another way, a person who has believed something without having it proved to him has exercised faith. Faith is, therefore, distinguished from the two other methods of learning, empiricism and rationalism.

Empiricism is a technical word which refers to the using of scientific methods to learn something or to prove something. The scientific method relies on the five senses for the proof of propositions. And each experiment produces either verification or refutation of the idea or point of view. A child who does not take his mother's word for the fact that the stove is hot may attempt empirical proof by touching the stove himself. He receives immediate experimental verification of the truth of his mother's statement.

The term rationalism is used to describe the method of arriving at proof through the logical method. This is proof by logical process of reason. In rationalism, logic produces documentation or refutation of a point of view.

Both empiricism and rationalism are very useful in learning; but neither is equivalent to faith.

### **Faith used in learning**

faith can also be described as a method of perception, or learning, which accepts an established criterion as the basis of reality. It is very convenient, and necessary, to use faith in this way. If we were to demand rational or experimental proof of everything stated to us, we would never get anything done.

Suppose you were using a mathematics textbook which made the statement "the sum of the angles of a plane triangle is 180 degrees." Using faith, you could accept that statement as a true fact, and you could build your study of triangles using this fact, even though you had not seen a formal proof of its validity.

To insist upon proof of this statement, however, would mean that you would have to take a course in geometry where the formal, logical proof of this statement is developed. But if you were a total skeptic (in the subject of triangles), you wouldn't even be able to begin the geometry course, because you would not be able to accept the statement, by faith, that "the shortest distance between two points on a plane is a straight line", one of the foundational axioms of plane geometry. You can see that faith is very useful, even indispensable, in every learning situation.

To this point in the study of faith, then, we have developed a partial understanding of what faith is and how it is used. Faith is:

- \* complete confidence in something which is not subject to logical or experimental proof
- \* acceptance of an established criterion as the basis of reality

### **The Christian's faith in the bible**

the "established criterion" which the Christian accepts by faith is that the bible is the word of god. The Christian accepts the bible as being what it claims to be, the "mind of Christ". By adopting this presupposition, the believer has a basis from which to delve into the whole bible

with its hundreds of concepts vital to all aspects of human life.

The faith system of learning bible truth is the only fair way for man to know and approach god. No one can claim personal credit for having believed the bible, because even a person of very low intellectual ability can believe and understand bible truth. Therefore, the faith system for acquiring doctrinal knowledge is perfectly fair and compatible with grace. It is the only method of learning which is commonly available to all members of the human race.

The value of faith does not lie in the strength or intensity with which a belief is held. (Every confidence man depends upon his victim's believing very strongly in lies.) The merit of faith lies, rather, in the idea or object which is believed. Faith is valid only when it has a valid object.

Saving faith has as its object the lord Jesus Christ and his substitutionary work on the cross for man's salvation, john 3:36; acts 16:31. A belief in any other "plan" of salvation, however strongly and emotionally held, will prove to have been faith in an invalid and useless object, acts 4:12.

Living faith has as its objects the facts, promises, and commands of the bible, matt. 4:4. Faith in bible principles is the only method which will unlock spiritual truth, I cor. 1:18 to 2:16. The believer who is growing spiritually receives continuous verification that the divine principles upon which he bases his life are perfectly valid, eph. 4:11-16.

#### How to have strong faith

the strongest, best established faith is that which is the result of Christian edification, that process by which a believer is rooted and built up in his spiritual life, col. 2:6,7. One of the most important results of Christian growth is the progressive increase in the believer's ability to use faith. Several important factors in the development of Christian faith are listed here along with some representative bible passages.

\* Faith requires the continuous intake of truth from the word of god. "...faith cometh by

hearing and hearing by the word of god...", Rom. 10:17.

\* Faith is part of the fruit of the holy spirit and requires the control of the spirit for its function. "...the fruit of the spirit is...faith...", Gal. 5:22,23; eph. 5:18.

\* Faith must be exercised daily by (1) using faith-rest principles in day to day living, "...we who have believed do enter into rest...", Heb. 4:1-3; and (2) by using faith patience in all situations, "...the testing of your faith worketh patience", James 1:3.

\* Applied knowledge overflowing from the human spirit, which refers to all witnessing, requires the exercise of faith. "...that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith...", Eph. 3:17-20.

\* Moving towards maturity includes the development of great faith. "...this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith...", 1 John 5:4,5; Heb. 11:6.

\* Daily occupation with the lord Jesus Christ "completes" faith. "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...", Heb. 12:2.

\* Undeserved suffering both tests and strengthens faith. "...the trial of your faith...", 1 peter 1:7,8.

#### The word "faith" in the bible

in the Greek language of the new testament there are five words which are rendered "faith" in the King James version. They are:

pistiv, (pistis), noun, meaning "faith; faithful; reliable; that which is believed", and, with the definite article, "doctrine"

pistov, (pistos), adjective, meaning "dependable; inspiring of trust; believing"

pisteuw, (pisteuo), verb, meaning "to believe; to be convinced"

peiqw, (peitho), verb, meaning "to obey (in the present tense); to be persuaded (in the aorist); to have confidence (in the perfect); faith (all tenses)"

pistow, (pistoo), verb, meaning "to show oneself faithful; to feel confidence"

in the Hebrew of the old testament there are ten words which are rendered in the king James version as "faith" or as some equivalent idea of belief or trust. They are:

ahman, verb, "to believe without merit"

eimoon, noun, "belief; faithfulness"

eimoonah, noun, "truth; steadiness; doctrine; faith"

ahmein, noun, "truth; doctrine"

ohmein, noun, "faithfulness"

emeth, noun, one of the strongest words for truth

bahtak, verb, the faith rest verb which was originally a word used by wrestlers for giving someone a body slam. See psalm 37:3; 91:2. It means "to slam your troubles on the lord", and it means "faith" in the sense of the function of the faith-rest principles. This verb is used extensively in the old testament.

Kahsah, verb, psalm 57:1, used of a rabbit fleeing from a desert fox and finding refuge in the cleft of the rock where the fox can't reach him. Means "to believe" in the sense of finding refuge in the word or taking shelter in the lord.

Yahkal, verb, "to trust" in circumstances of pressure or suffering. Job 13:15; lam. 3:21,24.

Kahwah, used in the sense of binding or twisting strands of fiber together to make a rope. Threads which are weak in themselves are woven together into strength. The meaning is that we are weak and can be broken, but woven into the lord and his word, we cannot be broken. Isa. 40:31; Lam. 3:25.

### Faith-Rest

#### Introduction

One of the consistent features of the Christian life is testing. We live in a fallen world, in an imperfect society, among people whose way of life is directed by Satan and their own sin natures. We cannot avoid the friction, conflict, or confrontation that results from this. We face daily disasters, small and great, which are brought on us suddenly by nature, by the

ignorance or deliberate actions of other people, or even by our own mistakes and sins.

Faith-Rest is God's plan for Christians who are going through testing, who are having problems. Faith-Rest is the means by which Christians can have JOY, a happiness in this life which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things. Think of it! God promises that you can have the peace and joy of God, in spite of what's happening in your life, in spite of the problems and testing that you are going through.

Your testing may be mild or severe, or anything in between. There are family troubles, money problems, social conflicts, problems on the job...the list is endless. The charge of the elephant, or the charge of the mosquito, will come at any time, and usually without warning.

But you can always depend upon God's immediate and constant provision for you in your time of testing. He knows all about our tests before they occur and has made provisions in advance to meet our needs. (Eph. 1:3,4)

1 Cor. 10:13, "These has no testing taken you but such as is common to man; but God will, with the testing, also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Hebrews 4 tells us that the wilderness generation didn't find rest because they didn't trust God to keep His promises. There's no reason we (believers of the church age) have to make the same mistake."

Whether the test is small or great, it is allowed by God to measure our faith and our application of the things He has provided for us in this life.

1 Peter 1:7 "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than that of gold that perishes, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 5:6,7 "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you."

#### Definition of Faith-Rest

Faith-Rest: the process of understanding, believing, and applying the doctrines and

promises of God's Word in times of testing in the Christian life.

The term "faith-rest", and its definition above, is taken from the Scriptures in Hebrews 4:1,2 "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

(Read Hebrews 3 and 4 before continuing with this study.)

Faith-Rest is designed to be used by the Christian throughout his lifetime, on a daily basis, as a technique for maintaining peace and spiritual balance during difficulties, problems, or disasters in life. Faith-Rest is one of the Christian's most important resources in making rapid progress toward Christian maturity and the production of divine good in the life.

There are two reasons why Christians fail to grow and prosper in the Christian life, and fail to profit from all the blessings, promises, and logistical provisions which God has put in place.

The most common reason for failure to "enter into rest" is a lack of knowledge of God's plan and the assets He has provided for us. Christians who don't know what the Word of God says will never know the promises of God or the provisions He has made for testing.

The other reason for failure is seen in the Children of Israel of the wilderness generation. They heard the teaching but did not mix it with faith, so they did not enter into rest (the promised land).

Examples of Faith-Rest (or lack thereof)

In this section, there are several examples from the Bible in which the people of God had ample information on which to base their faith in God. Sometimes the people trusted God and prospered. Sometimes the people showed a complete lack of trust in God and fell apart when the tests came.

You will see in these Bible passages that the extent of a believer's spiritual maturity becomes obvious in hard times. It's easy to maintain a

facade when things are going well, when there's plenty of money, good health, and little to worry about. All Christians look and behave about the same in good times. But when testing comes, those who have actually failed to grow in Christ come apart at the seams, and fall back into patterns of worry, blaming other people, and trying to solve their own problems by worldly means.

The examples discussed here are:

- Abraham, who first distrusted, then believed God, Genesis 15
- The Bitter Water Test at Marah, Exodus 15
- The No-Food Test and the First No-Water Test at Meribah, Exodus 16,17
- The "Giant" Test, Numbers 13 and 14
- The Second No-Water Test, Numbers 20

The Example of Abraham - Genesis 14 and 15

Genesis 14 has the account of Abraham's great victory. After a victory there is a tendency to let down, to be vulnerable, both in the physical and spiritual realms. A football team coming off a win is harder to motivate for the next game. A victorious army tends to become complacent and underestimate the enemy. It is well to remember that Satan keeps charging; and he is especially skilled at counterpunching, at exploiting any temporary weakness. And worry is one of Satan's chief weapons.

1 Peter 5:8,9 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion walks about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

Gen. 15:1 "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceedingly great reward.'

Here is God's promise of protection and an outpouring of grace blessings. The Lord has solutions for Abraham based on grace provisions which God had laid up for him from eternity past. That is, God's plan for Abraham is already set up and operational. It is merely a matter of

Abraham's remembering God's previous promises and believing them.

God says "Do not worry; do not be frightened." There is only one logical thing for Abraham to do when the Lord is his shield, strength, and reward - RELAX!

Deut. 31:6-8 "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them [the giants in Canaan]; for the Lord your God, he it is who goes with you; he will not fail you, nor forsake you. And Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, 'Be strong and of good courage; for you must go with this people unto the land which the Lord has sworn unto their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you, neither forsake you; fear not, neither be dismayed.'"

Isa. 41:10-13 "Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were angered against you shall be ashamed and confounded, they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with you shall perish. You shall seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with you; they that war against you shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought."

Who is the one making these promises? It is the Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe! And every promise of God is backed up by His perfect character and His perfect character. Our thinking about His promises can be related to His divine attributes, for example:

Sovereignty: God in His designed Faith/Rest as part of His plan for us.

Righteousness: God is perfect goodness, so any trial will be good for us.

Justice: Guarantees that His plan for us is fair, that we will always be treated justly.

Love: we know that every situation in life is governed by God's love for us.

Eternal Life: God is eternal and we have everlasting life with Him through Christ's work

on the Cross. God always plans with eternity in view.

Omniscience: God knows about my trials or sufferings even before they happen; and He has already planned what to do about them.

Omnipresence: God is always present and available to help.

Omnipotence: God is all-powerful so He always has the capability to carry out his promises and to provide help in time of need.

Immutability: God never changes in His attitude toward us, and all of His characteristics remain the same, forever.

Truth: God never lies; therefore what He has promised, He will perform (see Romans 4).

Abraham has had great victory, then he fails. He has started to worry, to cave in. He still feels he has something to complain about. He has no male heir, and if there is no male heir, the inheritance will go to Eliezer.

Gen. 15:2 "And Abram said, 'Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?'"

Worry can be a sin, Rom. 14:23, "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Worry is, in fact, often equivalent to blasphemy. Worry slanders God by saying that His promises are lies or that God is not able to keep His promises. In other words, the fearful person believes that God cannot or will not keep His promises.

Worry is the opposite of Faith-Rest. And Faith-Rest is the answer to worry.

Abraham has two choices: (1) he can try to solve his own problems by worrying, fretting, planning, being upset and angry, trying to scrounge up answers, trying to work around things, etc., or (2) he can let God solve the problems he cannot handle.

Gen. 15:3 "And Abram said, 'Behold, you have given me no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is my heir.'"

Abraham blames God for his troubles. Blaming others, especially blaming God, is a sure sign of spiritual deterioration. A mature person takes responsibility for his own actions. It is a trend in modern psychology to find someone or

something to blame for troubles, such as parents, the environment, the community, politicians, employers, etc. But this tendency ignores every divine provision, every blessing, every law, and every principle of suffering.

Gen. 15:4-6 "And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, 'This shall not be your heir, but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir.' And he brought him forth abroad, and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if you can number them.' And he said to him, 'So shall your seed be.' And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

Here God restates His promises (of the Abrahamic Covenant) and gives Abraham a dramatic illustration of what He means, by showing him the stars. Finally, Abraham believes God. He has about 15 more years to wait before Isaac is born, but he is able to wait patiently and have inner peace because he has laid his burden on the Lord.

#### The Bitter Water Test - Exodus 15

Have you ever had a wonderful Sunday attending church, worshipping the Lord, enjoying the fellowship of believers, everything that make you glad to be a Christian, only to see your whole attitude change at work on Monday as your job seems to throw you into another world?

Read Exodus 14 and 15 of the account of the Israelites escaping from Egypt. They saw God 24 hours a day in the cloud and in the fire. In their terror of the Egyptians they prayed frantically to God to save them, and saw the Red Sea open up, crossed on dry land, and watched the Egyptian army being destroyed as the waters closed back over them.

And what a victory celebration they had. Read the great song of victory they sang. "The Lord is my strength and my song...The Lord is a man of war...Thy right hand, O Lord, has dashed in pieces the enemy...Who is like thee, O Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders..." And on and on.

But ... just three days later, on the march, they came to the Bitter Sea, Marah, and ...

Exo. 15:24,25 "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He tested them."

As a nation, the Israelites were spiritually immature. They had no spiritual stamina and no real understanding of who the Lord is or what He could do. This is the first of many tests they would fail, tests designed to demonstrate to them how helpless they were without God. As you know, throughout their 40 years wandering in the wilderness, and in spite of daily teaching from Moses, Aaron, and Levites, in spite of witnessing miracle after spectacular miracle, only a small percentage of these people ever learned to rely completely on the Lord.

#### The No-Food Test and First No-Water Test - Exodus 16,17

Exodus 16 gives details of the No Food test, also failed by the Israelites, in which they murmured again against Moses, Aaron, and God. In this case God provided manna for them. This chapter is a litany of whining, complaining, and miserable behavior. And chapter 17 continues the story.

There was no water at Rephidim, and the people blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt so that their children and cattle could die of thirst. Their complaining was so vehement that Moses named the place Meribah ("chiding").

Of course, the Lord provided water from the rock, at the same time giving a beautiful picture of the gospel. Remember that God's grace depends on His character, not on our character or faithfulness. The people received what they did not deserve.

#### The Giants Test - Numbers 13,14

Numbers 13 describes a reconnaissance patrol which was led by a high ranking officer from each of the 12 tribes. Moses would not commit a force of 2,000,000 people into a land without sending out a patrol. The patrol would spend 40 days in enemy territory before returning to Kadesh-Barnea.

Num. 13:1,2. The people received directions from the Lord. Note the promise, "...the land which I give unto the children of Israel..." The Israelites were not being asked to move into the land on "blind faith". There is no such thing as blind faith. Faith is the best eyesight in the world when it is based on the promises of God. Faith is the ability to rest on God's omniscience.

Num. 13:3-16. Caleb and Joshua are recognized as two of the great men of history, men who know the wisdom and grace of God and are willing to commit themselves to it. To them, the Word of God was more real than any situation they were to face. They were fully adjusted to their circumstances, whether good or adverse.

Num. 13:17-20. Detailed instructions for the reconnaissance. "Be ye of good courage..." One thing necessary for a successful mission, the right mental attitude. The difference between courage and fearfulness is being emphasized here. And the difference is Faith-Rest! Caleb and Joshua believed the promises of God, the other ten did not. Caleb and Joshua had courage, the other ten did not.

When the spies returned, the camp was divided into two groups, a small group of confident, courageous people who believed God, and a large group of fearful people who were shaking in their boots. There were giants in the land, and the majority were afraid of them, in spite of the promises of God.

The Lord is greater than any giant in a Christian's life. "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." The Lord knew in advance that there would be giants in Canaan, and He had prepared everything ahead of time for them to occupy the land. Yet, in spite of having met (and failed) test after test, and having seen God perform many wonderful miracles, they still lacked courage.

Num. 13:21-27. This is a complete confirmation of what the Lord said would be the case in the land. And His promises had been repeated time after time. Exo. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3.

"Milk and honey" is an idiom for a prosperous land. The only believers who enjoy the provision of God are those who see and

appropriate God's provisions by faith. We do not live by sight. We have provisions for today, food, clothing, shelter. But what God provides for the soul cannot be seen, except by faith. But the eyes of Faith-Rest are greater than natural eyes.

Num. 13:28-33. There is no doubt that they are up against a formidable enemy. The Hittites were one of the greatest nations in the ancient world; they discovered iron and were the first to use iron weapons. The Jebusites were very powerful warriors who had not been conquered for several hundred years; their central fortification was a city called Jerusalem. The Amalekites were craft idol and demon worshippers and child sacrificers.

Caleb had seen God handle all of their problems time after time, but he was not able to persuade the rest of the people. They were afraid of the giants.

Num. 14:16. This verse explains the whole thing. The Lord could not bring them into the land because (1) their attitude toward God was bad; (2) their attitudes toward people was bad (mental attitude sins); and (3) they were negative toward God and His teaching.

Num. 14:17,18. Lack of faith in God affects succeeding generations. Where parents do not teach their children, and set the example for them, the children will follow the worldly ways of their parents. Moses prays to God that somehow He will prevent this.

Num. 14:19-23. These verses provide great insight into how God's love and grace can be shown while not compromising His justice and righteousness. He forgives the people for their lack of faith, but He still forbids the majority from entering the promised land.

Num. 14:24. Caleb was different. He listened to the Word of God every day, and He maintained an attitude of faith that was in line with the doctrine and promises he had learned. Therefore he had a relaxed mental attitude and a good knowledge of how to function in God's plan.

Num. 14:25-30. A description of darkness in the soul. God calls this people an evil congregation

and pronounces the sin unto death on the majority of the adult population.

#### The Second No-Water Test - Numbers 20

Historically, now, we are near the end of the 40 years wandering occasioned by the sins and unbelief of the previous generation. Most of those who were adults 39 years ago have died in the wilderness. Now their children are adults, and they have apparently learned nothing! For here is a repetition of the "no-water" test, in the same location and virtually under the same circumstances as the first one.

Num. 20:1. Miriam died at this time, and she was buried in Kadesh. Her death is representative of those who were removed under the final stage of divine discipline, the sin unto death. Now the new generation faces the issue of Faith-Rest living.

Num. 20:2. "There was no water for the congregation..." God will permit tests of all sorts, usually in the form of some disaster, heartache, frustration, or pressure situation which could be classified as a "no-water" situation.

You can handle a "no-water" situation in two ways. You can try to solve it yourself, or you can put it into the Lord's hands. The issue is what takes place in the soul. Resting in God, claiming the promises, requires categorical knowledge of the Word of God and a proper attitude of faith toward the Lord and His teaching.

No hopeless situation is really hopeless when viewed from the divine viewpoint. A believer who has Bible principle applied in his life is going to manifest many things, including a relaxed mental attitude, true happiness and joy, and a reliance on promises.

A no-water situation is never a no-water situation with God. He has provided the "water" for every situation before the world was created. But the promises of God are never superimposed on the believer's life. They are an expression of His love, but God does not force His love upon us.

The believer who does not live in the Word has mental sins, fears, worry, anxiety, bitterness, etc.

And this is expressed through murmuring. The believer with doctrine in the soul expresses his own love for God through Faith-Rest.

Num. 20:3. "The people chode (meribah) with Moses..." As soon as things go wrong, the sin nature begins to express the darkness in the soul, bitterness, implacability, fear. This causes the people to murmur against the authority which God has provided and they blame Moses and Aaron for the whole thing.

These people are actually suicidal, an evidence of great inconsistency, extreme emotional swings, and complete disorientation to life.

Num. 20:4,5. Note, this "evil place" that the congregation is complaining about is exactly the same place where God had demonstrated His love and grace before, by providing water! The believer who calls Grace "evil" has a badly scarred up soul. They have negative volition to grace and the promises of God. In their self-consciousness they have self-pity. Their mentality is dominated by mental attitude sins of worry, bitterness, vindictiveness. Their emotions are unstable. And in their conscience they have strictly human viewpoint and standards.

They are thinking of the details of life, and they expect the details of life to bring them happiness. Any believer who ignores the Word of God and looks to details of life for provision and happiness has had it! The Word of God points the believer toward God; human viewpoint points him toward Egypt.

When a believer recalls something from his past, something pleasant, instead of recalling he promises of God, he is "looking back at Egypt." A Christian who operates on Grace principles can take Egypt of leave it. He will be confident and happy in any situation, because God is greater than the most hopeless situation.

God demonstrates His love for us through adversity in a way that would be impossible in Heaven. Heaven is perfect environment, with no problems of any kind.

Hebrews 3:7-9 "Wherefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation (meribah: from the Hebrew of Psalm 95:8-11), in the day



of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, proved me, and say my works forty years."

To "harden one's heart" means to have a habitual and willful unbelief in God and His Word.

God was faithful to the people for the whole 40 years of wilderness wandering, yet they failed the "no water" test.

#### The Benefits of Faith-Rest

As a Christian grows in grace, he will use Faith-Rest with increasing skill and power, and it will support all of his divine viewpoint thinking and production. Faith-Rest relies entirely on the continuous ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit, therefore the believer will benefit from Faith-Rest only when he is in fellowship, walking in the Spirit [Rom. 14:23].

Faith-Rest was the means of spirituality for believers in the Old Testament. [See Hab. 2:4; Heb. 11; Rom. 4:17-25] One of the principle passages relating to Faith-Rest is Hebrews 3 and 4, particularly the section from 3:6 to 4:16. Please read this passage in your Bible before proceeding.

Following are some principles of the Faith-Rest system:

- Faith-Rest is from God, Who is perfect. No human works or deeds can be added to this perfect divine provision.
- To enter into God's rest, the believer must cease from his deeds (human good) and enter into a rest in which he does no work. The Holy Spirit does the work, Heb. 3:7 to 4:16.
- Faith is required, not works. Faith implies the absence of human merit. The merit for Faith-Rest lies in the object of faith, God the Father and His Word. The doctrines and promises of the Word must be mixed with faith, Heb. 4:1,2.
- Faith-Rest produces a relaxed mental attitude and victory over mental attitude sins, Isa. 26:3,4; Rom. 5:5.
- Faith-Rest is the basis for dynamics in prayer, Mt. 21:22; Mk. 11:25.
- Faith-Rest is a principle of victory in spiritual warfare, Heb. 11:6; 1; Jn. 5:4,5.

- Faith-Rest is a part of the Christian Way of Life in the Church Age, 2 Cor. 5:7.

The extent to which Faith-Rest applies to every aspect of a believer's life can be seen in the more than 7,000 individual promises in the Bible which can be claimed by the Christian in one way or another. See, for example, 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 4:8; 55:22; 56:3.

In order for Faith-Rest to function it is necessary for the Christian to take in the Word of God on a daily basis, so that he learns which promise provisions have been made available. And The Christian continually filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit through confessing sin Biblically. Use of the Word of God in this manner provides the following benefits:

- Inner rest, the "peace of God that passes all understanding."
- A happiness (+H) that does not depend on people, circumstances, or things.
- A relaxed mental attitude arising out of victory over sins of mental attitude.
- The ability to have genuine personal love toward those close to you and genuine impersonal love toward others.
- The desire to be occupied with Christ and to study God's Word more.
- Divine provision for every need.

The key to the success of the Faith-Rest system lies in the validity of the object of our faith, the Word of God. Therefore, every aspect of the perfect character (essence) of God the Father supports Faith-Rest.

#### How to Apply Faith-Rest

The objective of Bible teaching is the presentation of Bible doctrine which the Christian can use in his daily life. People differ in their abilities to retain and recall doctrines and promises when they are needed.

You never know when you will be required to use a particular doctrine, and you may be able to recall only a tiny amount of what you have heard from the Pastor-Teacher in the past. For this reason, you must take in doctrine on a daily basis so that usable doctrine accumulates

gradually in small increments, line upon line and precept upon precept.

There must also be continuous repetition of important principles and reinforcement in learning how various Bible principles interrelate.

As you study the Bible you will discover that a divine frame of reference is being built in your soul by which you can receive, understand, and apply further doctrinal teaching. Truth builds upon truth. Isa. 28:10. You will see that God's viewpoint is gradually replacing your human viewpoint on many issues. You are building a set of divine standards by which you will be able to exercise wisdom and discernment and make correct decisions in life.

You will grow in spiritual maturity if you maintain continuous momentum in the Christian Way of Life for an extended period of time. Your personal intake of the Word of God constitutes its own reward as you benefits from living the truth.

In the faith application of the Word of God, you will draw on your accumulated resources of Bible teaching in order to cope with your problems and take control of your own life. The Word of God in your soul makes you self-sustaining, independent of anything in the world system, and able to face life with courage and confidence as you fulfills God's plan for your life.

Faith-Rest, then, is designed by God as a versatile technique for overcoming problems in life. By FAITH you apply doctrine logically from the resources in your soul, meanwhile you are RESTING in the promises of the Word of God.

The steps in the Faith-Rest technique are:

1. Establish fellowship with God (the filling of the Holy Spirit) through Biblical confession of sin.
2. You may then recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises from the Word.
3. As a means of calling up divine viewpoint thinking, concentrate on pertinent doctrines related to the issue at hand.

4. Take control of the situation as you reach doctrinal conclusions.

#### An Example of Faith Rest - Victory Over Fear

Because concentration on Bible truth is so important, your mental attitude is a prime target of Satan's attacks against the power of the Word of God. Mental attitude sins and doctrinal thought cannot coexist. Everyone is susceptible to various combinations of events, circumstances, or people who cause arrogance, bitterness, depression, self-pity, worry, anger - anything to block out God's thoughts.

One of your most potent enemies, for example, is fear. Fear is a mental attitude sin which shuts down thought and closes out divine viewpoint. No matter how much doctrine is resident in your soul, none of it will help if your mind is immobilized by fear.

Note: It is not a sin to be scared, to be afraid of something that is dangerous or which threatens to harm you. Sinful fear, though, is a continuing morbid mental attitude in which you say, in effect, that God cannot or will not protect you in time of danger.

Fear opposes the believer's confidence and courage in the Christian Way of Life, 1 Jn. 4:18. It is not surprising to find that one of the strategies most often used by Satan is that of causing believers to be filled with fear.

To deal with fear, proceed as follows:

Confess sin . Fear is a sin. While confession will not conquer fear, it must be the first step. The fear has caught you off guard and you must quickly recover your mental poise and your ability to think and use doctrine. Therefore, confession and restoration to fellowship is the first requirement.

Claim promises. Following confession of sin, recover a relaxed mental attitude by claiming promises found throughout the Word of God relating to fear, such as

Isa. 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Rom. 8:28, "For we know in fact, that to those who love God, he works all things together for good, to those who are the called ones according to a predetermined plan."

If you don't remember many good promises, look them up in a concordance, look at a list of promises, or call a friend for some help.

A promise is God's guarantee, a capsule statement of Bible doctrine on which to anchor your mental attitude. A promise expresses the character of God and provides you with an instant perspective on things and gives you the ability to reduce the most complicated situation to utmost simplicity. Where panic reigned, peace can now be restored.

Note: claiming promises is never an end in itself. It is only the beginning of the application of Faith-Rest. Promises cannot sustain a relaxed mental attitude and they cannot solve complex problems. Promises are used to make possible the most important phase of Faith-Rest, doctrinal thinking.

Apply doctrine. Your concentration on doctrine in Bible class and in your studies has brought doctrine into your soul. Now you will apply this doctrine by moving it to the front of your mind to meet the demands of the moment. You will apply a "rationale" to the situation.

A "rationale" is a "reasoned exposition of principles or statements of reasons; a set of reasoned rules or directions." By mentally tracing out the principles related to a crisis, you are re-explaining to yourself the basic concepts of doctrine that apply to the situation. This is necessary because fear and the accompanying emotions have revolted against thought, and you must take conscious and deliberate steps to reinstate the rightful authority in your soul.

You could, for example, think through some conclusions derived from Rom. 8:29,30, "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers, and those He predestinated, He also called, those He called, He also justified; those He justified He also glorified." Your thought process might go like this ...

First, "God thought about me in eternity past."

Next, "He designed a perfect plan for me in eternity past."

Then, "He chose me for a privileged part in His plan."

Therefore, "God can bless me right now because I possess His righteousness."

Finally, "God will bless me forever in Heaven."

These simple statements are really a set of five basic doctrines which help restore divine viewpoint thinking. By using this system of concentrating on doctrines which you have already learned, you can immediately recall your place in the overall picture of God's grace. By this faith application of doctrine, you can become stabilized and regain objectivity.

Take control of the situation.

Romans 8:31,32, "What conclusion are we forced to face with these things? Since God is for us, Who is against us? Who did not spare His own unique Son, but delivered Him over on our behalf, how shall He not with Him graciously give us all things."

These conclusions, stated in these verses as rhetorical questions, enable you to take control of situations which formerly caused fear and anxiety. With objectivity and confidence restored, you can evaluate your circumstances and make the decision or take the action which your own wisdom and discernment dictate as the solution to the problem.

Even if the problem is hopeless, completely beyond your control, you can still cope with it by intelligently trusting the Lord for a solution.

Any Bible doctrine you have stored in your human spirit can be developed into a rationale to meet a test or crisis in your life.

At one time or another you will need every doctrine that you have had an opportunity to learn.

If you find yourself lacking inner resources in time of crisis, it means that you have not prepared yourself in advance for the testing. Testing will come, ready or not.

### Faithfulness of God

The faithfulness of God to the believer is expressed in many ways in the Bible.

The faithfulness of God to forgive sin.

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

The faithfulness of God in keeping us saved.

2 Tim. 2:13, "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

2 Thess. 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful who shall establish you and keep you from evil."

The faithfulness of God in times of pressure.

1 Cor. 10:13, "There has no testing taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tested above that you are able; but will with the testing also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it."

The faithfulness of God in providing for us under the partnership of Christ.

1 Cor. 1:9, "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ."

The faithfulness of God in keeping His promises to us.

Heb. 10:23, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."

The faithfulness of God to us in times of suffering.

1 Pet. 4:19, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator."

The faithfulness of God in providing for the believer's eternal future.

1 Thess. 5:24, "Faith is He that calls you who also will do it!"

### Forgiveness

The word "forgive" is a Grace word, in the English as well as in the Greek. An early meaning in English was "to give or to grant".

Then, forgive came to mean "to remit a debt; to give up resentment or claim for requital; to pardon an offense."

All of us are debtors to others, to society as a whole. And we often feel that people owe us many things in our human relationships. We feel we are owed courtesy and consideration. Sometimes we think that we are owed reward or status or promotion in some enterprise, or on the job. We are certainly owed fair treatment, justice, restitution and many other things.

But, many people in America are spiritually, ethically, and morally bankrupt. They simply cannot pay society what they owe! They are thoughtless, selfish, ungracious. What should a Christian do about all of the debts owed to him. Answer: forgive them, as Christ forgave you.

A Christian who practices Grace thinking (divine viewpoint) will become a forgiving person. To forgive means "to give up a claim; to cease bearing resentment".

The rich man in Luke 7 was able to forgive the two debtors because he was prosperous. He gave to them out of his prosperity. A person can only give to others out of what God has already provided in the way of prosperity. In terms of money, the principle is "Let him that stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor, doing with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

As a growing Christian, you have many other kinds of prosperity, by the Grace of God. You have intellectual prosperity (divine viewpoint). You have spiritual prosperity (peace with God). You have emotional prosperity (relaxed mental attitude). You have financial prosperity (mastery of details of life). You have social prosperity (stable marriage, stable family life, etc.).

Wherever in your life you find that someone else owes you something, you have the wherewithal to forgive him! God has forgiven all of us who are absolutely without resources of our own. And He is not expecting or demanding some kind of payment in return for His Grace gifts. And we are to be channels of Grace to the world.

"Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water."

### **Husband of a Happy Wife**

It seems to be mostly women who read the books and attend the classes on How to Please Your Husband, How to be Submissive, How to Help Him, and so forth. We men seem to be fairly successful in dodging this sort of thing. Our wives would surely have a good case if they would ask us to take equal time to learn our "trade" as spouses. But my observation of myself and other husbands is that it's going to take a lot more than that to get us into classes on husband-hood.

Fortunately, there is another method, somewhat more subtle, but very effective nevertheless. Pastors who do systematic Bible teaching know that many principles of the Christian way of life are very useful in making husbands into people who are fit to live with. So - if a husband can't be cajoled or bribed into a special class, he can still be learning in the regular Bible classes the principles he needs on which to pattern his activities as a family man.

The biblical principles related to marriage and the husband's duties, when they are understood and applied by husbands, can produce wonderful results. And really, it is the standard and basic Christian life principles, so useful in all areas of spiritual growth, that are the most important in developing and maintaining a happy and productive relationship between spouses.

A husband is commanded to love his wife. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church..." (Eph. 5:25) It is true that young women are to be taught by older women how they are to love their husbands (Titus 2:4). But nowhere in Scripture is there the same forceful command to women to love their husbands. It is paramount in the Bible that the wife's love is the willing response to that which the husband initiates.

Lack of harmony in the home, for which the husband has the predominant responsibility, is so important that 1 Peter 3:7 states that a man's prayers will not be answered if such harmony is not present. Failure on a man's part to treat his

wife in Grace, and failure on his part to train his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, are carnality. A husband who despises and hates his wife and neglects his family's spiritual welfare is living in sin, just as surely as the unrepentant adulterer or the confirmed drunkard.

Along with other types of backsliding believers who are stumbling blocks in the way of someone's spiritual progress, the man who persists in maintaining an unstable home life is a prime candidate for serious divine discipline.

The ability to manifest love is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit and is a product of consistent and long-term spiritual growth. Therefore, a man's capacity for love for his wife is proportional to his total spiritual progress. A man's spiritual progress is relatively easy to see; and it is certainly noticeable to his family. True spiritual growth results in a person's becoming more Christ-like every day; and this quality is observed when the fruit of the Spirit becomes more and more obvious.

Gen. 5:22,23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control..."

Look at those signs of maturity! Are you acquainted with husbands who exhibit these traits in their daily lives, with their wives and children? Do you realize that a man like this would be irresistible to his wife and a hero to his children? A man like this would have an excellent chance of winning even an unbelieving wife to Christ, in no time. Bible doctrine makes men out of boys, even if the boys are over thirty.

It is a principle of God's authority and the Chain of Command that "The one in authority initiates and the subordinate responds." In God's plan, men have an enormous capacity, by the Grace of God, to create the responses in their wives that are the most beautiful and pleasing.

If a husband is a bully, only the most spiritual, submissive, and dedicated wife will stay with him. Only a very mature woman will willingly endure long term suffering at the hands of an immature husband. There are a number of historical cases of godly women who suffered to

the point of death in the attempt to win the ungodly husband.

Certainly wives are commanded to be submissive. But the man who must demand that his wife submit, to get her cooperation, has missed the boat entirely. Anyone who is in a position of authority should never expect his subordinate to submit simply because it is his duty. Yes, the subordinate's duty is to be submissive; but the one in authority is in deep trouble if he must be authoritarian to get his way.

#### Characteristics of True Love

True love will have the characteristics listed in 1 Cor. 13. It is possible for anyone to compare the actions of any person with these Bible standards and determine whether true love is being exhibited. These would be especially useful for a single person trying to determine whether a member of the opposite sex has true capacity for love as God intended.

Where these traits are missing between husband and wife, it is the husband's responsibility to provide them (remember, "Love your wife..."). This is possible only through Christian growth towards maturity over a period of time under the continuous control of the Holy Spirit, as in Ephesians 4.

These same patterns dictate also the nature of the wife's response to her husband. But the man who believes that he will receive the proper response, without his first making the initial steps, is indulging in wild wishful thinking, to say the least.

Final Note: The husband who sees no need to change, or who refuses to submit to the Plan of God for his life and marriage, is going to have to abide by the results. His wife's response to him may be in large measure a response to what he sends her way; and in that respect, he gets what he deserves. Of course, many of us have wives who are themselves Grace-oriented, so they quite often do not "give tit for tat"; and we should be grateful for that underserved blessing.

#### Characteristics of Love (I Cor. 13)

Love is slow to lose patience. It doesn't demonstrate irritations or reflect anger or have a

quick temper. It has fully accepted the character of the one loved.

Love looks for a way to be constructive. Love is actively creative. It is able to recognize needs. It discovers successful methods of improving or contributing to the other's life.

Love is not possessive. Love does not hold exclusive control where one is allowed little or no freedom to fulfill himself apart from the one who loves him.

Love is not anxious to impress. Love doesn't seek to make an impression or to create an image for personal gain.

Love does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance. It is not self-centered. It has the ability to change and to accept change. It is flexible. It doesn't allow, or expect, life to revolved around itself.

Love has good manners. It has respect for others which results in a set of Christ-centered standards. It has discretion. It knows what is proper and when.

Love does not pursue selfish advantage. It does not have primary concern for personal appetites or for social status; but it shows concern for needs of the one loved and families and friends involved.

Love is not touchy. Love is not hyper-sensitive or easily hurt. It does not take things personally. It is not emotionally involved with personal opinions so that to reject ideas is to reject the one giving them.

Love does not keep account of evil. Love doesn't review wrongs which have been forgiven. It does not dwell on past sins. It destroys evidence of past mistakes wherever possible.

Love doesn't gloat over the wickedness of other people. Love doesn't compare self with others for self-justification. It doesn't use others' sin to excuse personal weaknesses.

Love is glad with all godly men when truth prevails. Love is in active fellowship with dedicated Christians. It is occupied with spiritual objectives.

Love knows no limit to its forbearance. Love has the ability to live with the inconsistencies of others. It has empathy for the problems of others.

There is no end to Love's trust. Love believes in the person loved and in the person's worth without question. It has no reason to doubt the person's integrity.

There is no fading of Love's confidence. Love is not fickle. It has perfect peace and confidence that God is primarily responsible for introducing the right partner at the right time.

Love has unlimited endurance. Love is able to outlast anything. It is able to endure all obstacles and even love in the face of unreturned love.

### **Inheritance**

Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and as the victor in the spiritual conflict, is the heir of all things. Heb. 1:1-4

Inheritance is based on sonship:

John 1:12, But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Rom. 8:16,17, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Gal. 3:26-29, For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

To inherit from God, a person must possess the life of God, that is, salvation resulting in eternal life.

Titus 3:5-7, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

1 John 5:11,12 And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Therefore, salvation is the qualification for inheriting from God. Col. 1:9-14

We have an inheritance because we share the destiny of Christ. The true doctrine of predestination is that we share Christ's destiny.

Eph. 1:11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

As joint-heirs with Christ, we also share Christ's election.

Heb. 9:15, And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Our heritage is related to the doctrine of Eternal Security.

1 Pet. 1:3-5, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance. Eph. 1:14

Abraham's inheritance is the pattern and illustration of the heritage of believers. Rom. 4:9-16

### **Levitical Sacrifices and Offerings**

"Without shedding of blood, there is no remission..."

There are several terms used in the Bible to describe the act of sacrifice. The first has to do with something given or offered to God, and is used particular with regard to bloodless offerings. Examples are the use of the word "gift" in Gen. 33:13-21; 43:11, etc.; the word "tribute" in 2 Sam. 8:2,6; 1 Kings 5:1 and 2 Kings 17:4; and the word "offering" in 1 Chron. 16:29 and Isa. 1:13.

The other type is the bloody sacrifice, in which the shedding of blood is the main idea, as opposed to the whole burnt offering which is completely burned. The Greek word *qusia* (thusia) is used for both the animal in the sacrifice and for the act of burning, whether literal or figurative. In the New Testament, a sacrifice (or offering) is 'olokautwma (holokautoma), which means "wholly consumed" (Latin holocaustum). See Acts 21:26; 24:17; Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:5; Mark 12:33; Heb. 10:6,8.

Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God (Gen. 4:3,4). Cain's offering was "of the fruit of the ground," and Abel "of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof". Then, Noah expressed his thanks for deliverance from the flood by offering burnt sacrifices on an altar he had constructed. The patriarchs consistently built altars and offered sacrifices, particularly in places where God had revealed Himself to them. As Edersheim has put it, in his book *The Temple*, "Indeed, to sacrifice seems as natural to man as to pray; the one indicates what he feels about himself, the other what he feels about God. The one means a felt need of propitiation, the other a felt sense of dependence."

In the Pentateuch, the fundamental idea of sacrifice is that of substitution; and under the Mosaic law the offering of sacrifice was a covenant duty, with the materials of the offering and the ceremonies described in minute detail. The ground on which the legal offering of sacrifices is based is the commandment, "None shall appear before me empty" (Exo. 23:15), or "Appear not empty before the face of Jehovah". That is to say, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:16,17).

No religious act in the Old Testament was complete unless accompanied with sacrifice; the system was designed by God with the intention of awakening a consciousness of sin and uncleanness and of showing the possibility of obtaining the forgiveness of sin and becoming righteous before God.

The presenting to God a gift of a portion of the results of one's labor implied a surrender of the person to God. But man is unholy and sinful, and is thus unable to surrender himself to the holy God. Therefore, laying the hand upon the head of the animal was a symbol of transferring to the victim of the sacrifice the sinfulness of the offeror. The animal thus took the place of the offeror and became his substitute; and the killing of the animal pointed out the necessity of death of the man whose sin alienates him from God.

However, sacrifices, as such, had no power in themselves to heal the rupture between God and man, because an animal cannot make an adequate satisfaction for the sin and guilt of man. When Jesus Christ, the sinless and righteous God-man, voluntarily offered Himself on the Cross, He fulfilled the Law of sacrifices and ordinances; and the typical meaning of each sacrifice and offering was brought out in full.

The rest of this study is devoted to a description of the Mosaic sacrifices and offerings, including a study of the materials used in each offering, the ceremony employed in making the sacrifice, and a brief discussion of the spiritual meaning, the typology, of each.

#### The Classes of Levitical Offerings

There were two classes of sacrifice in Old Testament times.

The first class was those sacrifices offered to enable a person to enter into communion (fellowship) with God. These are known as propitiatory offerings and included the sin and trespass offerings.

The second class was intended to be offerings made by believers in fellowship; and these included the burnt offerings, peace offerings, thank offerings, votive offerings, freewill offerings, and meal and drink offerings.



Keep in mind that when several sacrifices were offered on the same occasion, the propitiatory offerings were offered first, followed by the burnt offerings, and then the peace offering. The meal and drink offerings were offered with the burnt offerings, or by themselves.

#### Materials Used in Sacrifices

With respect to the materials used in the sacrifices, they were divided into two classes: the blood sacrifices, in which an animal was killed, and the bloodless offerings, the "meal" (vegetable and mineral) and drink offerings.

Animals offered included oxen, sheep, goats, and turtledoves or young pigeons. The pigeons were used by people who could not afford the more expensive animals (Lev. 5:7; 12:8) and to serve as lesser sin offerings. Both male and female cattle could be offered (Lev. 3:1-6), but among the sheep and goats special prominence was given to the male animal (Num. 15:5 ff; 28:11 ff). The animal had to be at least eight days old (Lev. 22:27; Exo. 22:30), although sheep and goats were usually offered when a year old (Exo. 29:38; Lev. 9:3), and oxen when they were three years old. Any animal offered had to be free from any blemish (Lev. 22:20-24).

Vegetables offered were grain, olive oil, wine, salt, and incense, which was partly vegetable and partly mineral. The grain was offered roasted in the ear or as fine flour, to both of which incense and oil were added (Lev. 2:1-15), or as unleavened bread or biscuits. The bread was either baked in an oven, baked in a pan, or fried in oil; in each case the flour was mixed with oil.

All of the animal and vegetable offerings had to be salted (Lev. 2:13; Eze. 43:24; Mark 9:49). Neither leaven nor honey were allowed in any offering made to God by fire (Lev. 2:13).

The animals and meat offerings selected for sacrifice were from the ordinary food of the Hebrews, in order to express gratitude for blessings bestowed and to pray for continuation of His goodness. As these offerings were the fruit of their life and work, and presenting them showed a consecration to God of their life with all its ability and energy.

#### The Method of Presentation of the Sacrifices

In animal sacrifices, the animal was brought to the door or the tabernacle, near the altar. The person bringing the animal placed his hand on the animal's head, then killed it at the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:4,5,11; 3:2,8; 6:25; 7:2). When the sacrifice was part of the regular services on festive occasions or offered on behalf of the whole people, the animals were slaughtered and cut up by the priests.

Once the animal was slain, the priest caught the blood in a vessel, and depending on the nature of the sacrifice, sprinkled some of it either on the side of the altar, on the horns of the Altar of Incense, or on the Ark (Day of Atonement). The remainder of the blood was emptied at the foot of the great altar. (Exo. 29:12; Lev. 4:17 ff)

The animal was then skinned and cut into pieces by the offeror (or priest), and either entirely burnt on the altar or just the fat burnt on the altar, with any remainder being burnt outside the camp. This "burning" amounted to cooking the animal, and the animal was then eaten by the priests, or by the priests along with the one who had brought the animal.

If the sacrifice was a bird, the priest wrung off the bird's head and allowed the blood to flow on the side of the altar. He then threw the viscera on the ash heap beside the altar, and the head and body were burnt on the altar (Lev. 1:15).

If vegetable offerings were being made at the same time as burnt offerings, part of the flour and oil, some of the ears of corn and the cakes, along with the incense, were burned on the altar, the remainder going to the priests, who were required to consume it in the court of the tabernacle without leaven (Lev. 2:2ff; 6:9-11; 7:9ff; 10:12ff). If the offering was a thank offering, one cake was presented as a wave offering (see below) to God, and was given to the priest who spilled the blood (Lev. 7:14), the remainder of the offering being eaten by those who presented it.

#### THE SIN OFFERING

The sin offering was first directly commanded in Lev. 4. "If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord

concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them", then that conduct would require a sin offering. The idea is that some sins are unintentional, "in error", and may have been committed through ignorance, hurry, lack of consideration, or carelessness, in other words, sins which came from human weakness, as opposed to sins which are deliberately and knowingly done in rebellion against God and His commandments. [The penalty for presumptuous sin was to be cut off from among God's people (Lev. 15:30).]

The effect of the sin offering was forgiveness of the sin and cleansing from the pollution of sin (Lev. 4:20,26,31,35; 5:10; 12:8; 14:20; 16:19). Its presentation assumed that the offeror was conscious of sin; and the laying on of the hands was understood to mean that the sin was to be transferred to the animal (Lev. 4:4,14).

The soul was brought into fellowship within divine grace through the pouring out of the blood of the sacrifice, analogous to the death of Christ on the Cross. The burning of the fat on the altar was an offering of a "sweet savor" to God, and was symbolical of the handing over to God the better part of man, that which is capable of cleansing and renewal, in order that it might be purified by the fire of God's holiness and love.

#### The Material of the Sin Offering

The material to be offered was determined by the nature of the offense and by the position, or rank, of the one making the offering.

A young bullock was offered for a sin of the whole congregation (Lev. 4:13), for a sin of the high priest (Lev. 4:3), for the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:3), and for the consecration of priests and Levites to their offices (Exo. 29:10,14,35; Num. 8:8).

A he-goat was offered on new moon and annual festivals (Num. 28:15,22,30; 29:5,11,16,19), at the dedication of the tabernacle (and Temple) (Num. 7:16,22; Ezra 6:17, w/8:35), and for the sin of a prince (Lev. 4:23).

A she-goat was offered for a sin by one of the common people (Lev. 4:28,32; 5:6).

A she-lamb of a year old was offered for the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14:10,19) and when a Nazarite was released from his vow (Num. 6:14).

A pigeon or turtledove was used for purifying a woman after childbirth (Lev. 12:6), for a man or woman who had protracted issues of blood (Lev. 15:14,29), and for a Nazarite who had been defiled by contact with a dead body (Num. 6:10). A bird was also used as a substitute for a lamb in the case of poverty, for an ordinary offense (Lev. 5:7).

#### Method of Presenting the Sin Offering

If the offering was a bullock offered on behalf of the high priest or of the whole congregation, its blood was taken into the Holy Place and sprinkled seven times toward the inner veil, then upon the horns of the altar of incense. The remainder was poured at the foot of the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 4:5ff). If the animal was a ram, a she-goat, or a lamb, the blood was merely put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priests took the blood of the sin offering made for himself (the bullock) into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the Mercy Seat of the Ark. He then returned to the altar and took the blood of the goat offered for the sins of the congregation into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it in the same manner.

In all cases, the next step was to separate the fatty portions of the animal and burn them on the altar (Lev. 4:8-35).

In those cases in which the blood was sprinkled either in the Holy Place or in the Holy of Holies, the flesh, along with the skin, head, and all other parts of the animal were carried outside the camp (later, outside the city of Jerusalem) to a clean place where the ashes of sacrifice were usually placed, there to be consumed by fire (Lev. 4:11ff; 6:23; 16:27). In the case of other sin offerings, the flesh was eaten by the priests in the holy place (Lev. 6:26; Num. 18:9,10).

Any earthenware vessel from which the priests ate was broken; copper vessels were scoured. Garments on which blood had fallen were washed (Lev. 6:27,28).

### Typology of the Sin Offering

The sin offering presents Christ atoning for the guilt of sin (Heb. 13:11,12). It shows Christ as actually burdened with the believer's sin, standing in the sinner's place as his substitute. This offering tells of the Lord's death as presented in Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and 1 Peter 2:24. It carefully guards the holiness of Him who "was made sin for us."

### THE TRESPASS OFFERING

The trespass offering was also a propitiatory offering, but it was made for a special offense, while the sin offering was made for the person of the offender. "In fact, the trespass offering may be regarded as representing ransom for a special wrong, while the sin offering symbolized general redemption" (Edersheim, *The Temple*, p. 100ff).

The trespass offering was a ram, which was valued by a priest according to the shekel of the sanctuary (Lev. 5:15,18; 6:6; 19:21). In the case of a leper or a Nazarite, this offering was a lamb. These offerings were offered for the following offenses:

1. Trespass in ignorance against things of the Lord, that is, to inadvertently take away from God that which belonged to Him, of sacrifices, first fruits, tithes, etc. Compensation for the harm done accompanied the sacrifice, with the gift of a fifth part of the value to the priests.
2. Ignorant transgression of any definite prohibition of the law (Lev. 5:17).
3. Fraud, suppression of the truth, or perjury against a neighbor; with compensation to the victim and an additional fifth part of any property in question to the person wronged (Lev. 6:1ff).
4. Rape of a slave (Lev. 19:20-22)
5. At the purification of a leper (Lev. 14:12), and of a polluted Nazarite (Num. 6:12).

In this offering, the skin of the animal and any meat offering went to the officiating priest, except that portions that were mixed with oil or were dry were divided among all the priests.

### Typology of the Trespass Offering

This ritual shows Christ's atoning for the damage caused by sin and has in view the injury of the sin as opposed to the guilt of the sin. This aspect of the trespass offering is seen in Psalm 51:4, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest."

### THE BURNT OFFERING

The name for the burnt offering comes from the Hebrew word *holah*, "ascending", because, as the animal was wholly consumed in the fire (with the exception of the skin), the smoke would rise toward heaven. (The animals in other sacrifices were only partially consumed on the altar.) The burnt offering symbolized the entire surrender to God of the individual or congregation, God's acceptance of that surrender, and therefore the renewal and restoration of the individual. This offering was not made to atone for sin, as were the other offerings.

This offering was supposed to reflect the inward volition of every true Hebrew and so was required to be presented regularly on the following occasions:

1. Every morning and evening (Exo. 29:38-42; Num. 28:3-8).
2. Each Sabbath day, double offerings (Num. 28:9,10).
3. At the new moon, the three great festivals, the Day of Atonement, and Feast of Trumpets (Num. 28:11-29:39).

Special burnt offerings were required:

1. At the consecration of priests (Exo. 29:15; Lev. 8:18; 9:12).
2. At the purification of women (Lev. 12:6-8)
3. At the cleansing of lepers (Lev. 14:19).
4. For removal of other ceremonial uncleanness (Lev. 15:15,30).
5. On any accidental breach of the Nazarite vow, or at its conclusion (Num. 6:11,14).

Freewill burnt offerings were made on any solemn occasion such as the dedication of the tabernacle or the Temple (1 Kings 8:64).

The burnt offering was the only sacrifice that non-Israelites were allowed to bring. The emperor Augustus had a daily burnt offering brought for him of two lambs and a bullock; and this sacrifice was regarded as indicating that the Jews recognized him as their ruler. At the commencement of the Jewish war, the high priest Eleazar rejected this offering, which was seen as rebellion against Rome.

#### Typology of the Burnt Offering

In this offering, the idea of sin is not conspicuous, and sets forth Christ offering Himself without spot to God to perform God's will with joy; the offering is a sweet savor to God, so-called because it deals with Christ in His own perfections and devotion to the Father's will, as opposed to the non-sweet savor offerings which show Christ carrying the believer's sin.

The sacrificial animals symbolize Christ in some aspect of His redeeming character. The ox shows His patient endurance as Savior (1 Cor. 9:9,10; Isa. 52:13-15; Phil. 2:5-8). The sheep or ram portrays Christ in His unresisting facing of death (Isa. 53:7). The goat typifies a sinner, and, when it is used for Christ, shows Him as the One who was "numbered with the transgressors." The turtledove or pigeon symbolizes mourning innocence and portrays poverty. It shows forth Him who became poor that we might become rich. (Isa. 38:14; Heb. 7:26; Lev. 5:7; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:6-8).

#### The Moabites

The Moabites were descendants of Lot, Moab being the son of Lot and his older daughter.

[Ammon was the son of Lot with his younger daughter, thus the Ammonites. The Edomites were descended from Esau, the son of Isaac. The Amalekites were descended from Eliphaz, a son of Esau.]

#### Geography of Moab

The territory of Moab is usually described in three parts:

- The field of Moab, enclosed by natural fortifications. This portion was bounded on the north by the gorge of the Arnon river; on the west by the Dead Sea cliffs; on the south and

east by a circle of hills which have no natural opening except for the flow of the Arnon.

- The land of Moab was the more open country from the Arnon north to the hills of Gilead.
- The plains of Moab was the district in the low, tropical depths of the valley of the Jordan River.

When the Israelites came up from Egypt, they approached Moab from the southeast, outside the bordering circle of hills. They were forbidden to disturb the Moabites in their enjoyment of the land which they had taken from the Emim. DEUT. 2:9-11

Therefore, they applied for permission to pass through the territory of Moab. This was refused, so they went around its borders.

#### History of Moab

Although the Moabites refused passage to the Israelites, Moab did not fight against Israel while they were neighbors for more than 300 years. In fact, DEUT. 2:29 makes no complaint about hostility either of Edom or Moab, only mentioning that Moab lacked hospitality and hired Balaam to curse Israel.

There is no hint that either nation hindered Israel in its passage along the borders, although Edom did stand ready to fight should its territory be encroached upon. DEUT. 2:29 indicates that trade was carried on.

The Moabites were much too friendly, in fact, sending their daughters to cultivate friendly relations with Israelite men and to entice them into idolatry. NUM. 25:2 (note feminine of verb)

The Moabites peaceful character and their many possessions may account for the terror of Moabite King Balak at the approach of the Israelites. He took rather special means to guard against them. Instead of sending his army out, he first consulted with the leaders of Midian. Moab and Midian were kin by virtue of their common descent from Terah, Moab through Lot from Haran, and Midian from Abraham by Keturah. GEN. 11:27; 19:37; 25:2

The result of this conference was that the two nations united in sending for the prophet Balaam. NUM. 25

#### The Exclusion of Moab

The exclusion of Moabites and Ammonites from the congregation of the Lord to the tenth generation was not on account of hostility but because of their lack of hospitality and the hiring of Balaam. DEUT. 23:4 There is no direct prohibition of marriage with Moabites. These rules were made against Canaanites.

After the conquest of Canaan, Moab oppressed Israel for 18 years. It is significant, however, that "The Lord strengthened Eglon, the King of Moab, against Israel ... and he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek and went out and smote Israel" (Judges 3:12,13). The Moabite conquest ended with the assassination of Eglon by the judge Ehud.

#### The Time of the Kingdom

We read that Saul fought against Moab, 1 Sam. 14:47.

Early relations seemed fairly friendly, however, as we see in Ruth.

David, when being pressed by Saul, entrusted the safe keeping of his father and mother to the king of Moab. But, twenty years later, for some reason, he treated the Moabites hard and took spoil from them for the treasure of the temple, 2 Sam. 8:2. The Moabites became tributary to David. Later they again sent their daughters, this time to Saul to lead him astray.

The Moabites were still paying tribute in the days of Ahab, 2 Kings 3:4,5. After Ahab, they revolted. They collected an army (2 Chron. 20) of Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, and attacked Judah, then ruled by Jehoshaphat. Judah met them with prayer and praise of God. God caused dissension to break out in the camp of the enemy. The Moabites and Ammonites first slaughtered the Edomites, then each other, and Israel gathered the spoil.

Moabites continued to appear in Bible accounts and in historical accounts. [ See Unger's Bible Handbook ] Josephus described Moab as still a great nation in Roman times. The name "Moab"

remained in history until about 380 AD in the time of Eusebius.

The language of Moab was a dialect of Hebrew, differing from Biblical Hebrew only in some small details.

#### The Religion of Moab

Chemosh (ke-mosh) was the national deity of Moab. This god was honored with cruel and perverse practices including child sacrifices like those of Molech. The account on the Moabite Stone (see below) states that "the anger of Chemosh" is the reason for Israel's subjugation of Moab.

Solomon made a fatal mistake of rearing an altar to Chemosh in Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:7, and this abomination was not destroyed until almost 300 years later during the purge carried out by Josiah (2 Kings 23:13).

#### The Moabite Stone

The Moabite Stone is an important memorial of alphabetic writing. Erected by Mesha, king of Moab, to record his successful revolt against Israel and to give honor to the god Chemosh for his victory. The stone was set up about 850 BC

The stone was discovered in 1868 by a German missionary, Klein. He was on a visit to Moab and was told by an Arab sheik that there was an inscribed stone lying at the town of Dhiban, the ancient city of Dibon. On examining the stone he found it to be a stele of black basalt, round at the top and nearly four feet in length and two in width. There were thirty-four lines of inscription using the Phoenician alphabet.

Klein was not fully aware of the importance of his find. He returned to Jerusalem and informed the Prussian consulate of the discovery. The Prussians made plans to obtain the stone.

The next year, a member of the French consulate, M. Clearmont-Ganneau, heard that the stone was still lying in the open, exposed to the weather. He determined to get possession of it for France. He sent Arab natives to get "squeezes" made and to arrange the purchase of the stone.

These Arabs quarreled in the presence of some of the inhabitants of Dhiban, but an impression was made and delivered to the French consulate.

But the bidding for the stone, the arguments, and the rivalry between the Prussians and the French aroused in both Moabite and Turkish officials a good idea of the stone's value. So the governor of the province naturally demanded the prize for himself. The Arabs of Dhiban, rather than lose the stone for nothing to the governor of their province, lighted a fire under it, and when it was very hot, poured cold water on it and shivered it into pieces.

The pieces of the Moabite stone were distributed to various families in the area to put into their corn granaries as charms to protect from corn blight. A considerable number of these fragments have since been recovered, but without the squeeze which was taken when the stone was intact, it would have been impossible to fit many of them together.

The writing on the stone was deciphered in 1886 by two German professors who worked for weeks in the Louvre, where the squeeze may still be seen. The inscription on the stone supplements and corroborates the history of King Mesha of Moab as recorded in 2 Kings 3:4-27. The inscription is proof that the Moabites were akin to Israelites in language as well as in race. The likeness between the languages of Moab and Israel extends beyond grammar and syntax. It is a likeness which exists also in thought.

### Old Age

Many people have a tremendous dread of growing old. A great deal of activity during the working years is aimed at preventing as many of the problems of old age as possible: dependency on others, lack of money, boredom, ill health, and so forth. The very fear of the problems of old age often make mental and physical wrecks of people -- they become old before their time.

God's Plan is that old age be the crowning glory of a person's lifetime. The Word of God shows that old age can have promise, productivity, vitality, confidence, and a great deal of

happiness, providing that spiritual preparation has taken place during the younger years.

### Age Divisions in the Bible

The Bible indicates that there are three broad divisions of a lifetime.

The period of youth lasts up to about 40 years of age. Moses began to sense his responsibility to Israel and to the Lord when he was about 40, Acts 7:23. He spent 40 more years in training, however, before he became leader of the people of Israel. It was during the years from 80 to 120 that he did his great work.

In Acts 4:22, a man is healed and the Sanhedrin wanted to ridicule his testimony. However, "the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shown", indicating that he was mature enough to know what had happened.

In 1 Tim. 4:12, Paul writes, "Let no man despise thy youth." Timothy was in his thirties at the time.

The period of middle age last from about 40 to 60 years of age. In 1 Tim. 5:9, a 60-year-old widow's retirement was into a full time ministry of prayer supported by the church. Many believers hit their top pace in the middle years. The high priest's work load was heaviest between 30 and 50.

Old age is the period from 60 on. In Daniel 12, Daniel, at age 90, was told to stop acting like a dead man and to get going. In Luke 2:36-38, a woman of great age (84) was very active in serving the Lord.

### Some Principles of Old Age

Old age is a mental attitude as well as a physical problem. People shudder when you discuss old age. Next to the subject of death, it is the least favorite topic. There are many ways people try to postpone old age. They try various products to keep on looking and feeling young. They try traveling to relieve boredom and to give a sense of fulfillment. They use gadgets and programs to postpone old age.

But, the older one becomes as a believer, the better life should become! God's Plan is bigger

than any problem this life can produce. Of course, to take advantage of this plan, a person must understand Salvation and receive Christ as Savior. Then, the individual must get Bible teaching every day over a period of years to make it possible to obtain the maximum out of every day of life. According to God's Plan of Grace, which includes the concept of Dying Grace, the last day of your life should be the best.

But some of the most miserable old people around are Christians. They are cantankerous and obnoxious. Their youth is no longer there to protect them. They are seen for what their souls really are, without the camouflage of youth. "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." Youth is excused for bad behavior; but youth is no longer there to cover up. Old age exposes all the faults, habits, obnoxious characteristics, and degeneracy of soul.

When King Solomon reached old age, he wrote Ecclesiastes; and he has some advice for youth. A young person can prepare now to have a happy old age. Happiness is not in working, and it is not in retirement; it is not in this diversion or that. True happiness is in Christian growth, the production of the Fruit of the Spirit, operating on Divine Viewpoint, having a healthy edification structure in the soul -- having the inner beauty of soul.

"Rejoice, O young man!" "Find happiness when you are young." Then you can carry your happiness around with you, the inner mental happiness found in the Word of God, a happiness which does not depend on conditions, circumstances, people, or the details of life. This leads to a marvelous old age!

"And let thy heart cheer you in the days of your youth." Then you won't fight old age; old age will be the best age of all. This type of person is the salt of the earth in his old age, an aristocrat of the Christian family.

"Walk in the ways of your heart." Now the young person who is immersed in doctrine uses the Word of God in living the Christian Way of Life. "In the sight of thine eyes." The application of the Word of God to experience.

"But know that God will bring you to judgment; therefore remove sorrow from your heart, put away evil from thy flesh." This is a picture of judgment, chastisement, confession, claiming promises.

Therefore, old age is a mental attitude developed during a lifetime. The older one becomes as a believer, the better life should become.

Happiness in old age is dependent on what is built up during the previous years of youth and middle age.

### Problems of Old Age

As you read the following listing of the problems of old age, meditate on the Word of God and try to think of the doctrinal "antidote" for each problem. The prescription will be given in the succeeding sections of this article; but try finding answers in your own repertoire of doctrine.

- Old age may bring on a lack of mental sharpness. This can occur because of physical debility. Also, if the mind has been neglected, especially if the Word of God has been neglected, there will be a failure of the mentality.
- In old age, there can be a disorientation to life from the standpoint of success standards. A person looks back and regards life as a failure. Maybe he set goals, and now he is old and never realized the goals. There is a great danger of disillusionment.
- There is a tendency for great increase in mental attitude sins in old age, with emphasis on criticism and judgment. These things are often overlooked in youth; but they are horrible in the elderly.
- There is often a lack of security in old age, especially if the old people can't take care of themselves financially. Their children are in the prime of their lives and often the children's plans do not include them.
- Old age may bring an inability to concentrate, forgetfulness, inability to converse, to hear, to see. So the old person gets used to sitting in a chair daydreaming, vegetating, saying nothing.

- There is sometimes a lack of motive to live, too much idle time, and too much time for complaining. There may be a desire to travel but no means to do so. So there is a lack of significant things to do.
- Old age brings future shock. Old age finds itself out of phase with the younger generations of children and grandchildren. Therefore a dangerous trend can get started toward hypercriticism.
- The older believer may have stopped growing spiritually, or worse, may never have got started. There is, therefore, no edification, no occupation with Christ, no desire for the Word. There is a tendency to stagnate, to become jaded, to rely on the study done years before.
- There can be a tendency toward the negatives of Titus 2:3, becoming false accusers, gossips, evil speakers, vicious in criticism.
- There is a tendency among older believers to drink quite a lot when they don't have anything else going for them.
- Then, there is the tendency to think that getting old means that a person has some wisdom. So there is the garrulous senior citizen who never stops talking and inflicts continuous boredom on his listeners with his platitudes and homely chatter.

#### A Godly and Grace-Filled Old Age

Coming into old age, the mature believer is assured of his redemption; and he comes into old age as a knowledgeable, productive Christian. He understands both salvation and spirituality. He knows how to claim promises. He understands suffering, has lived through some of it, and looks forward to greater tests. He is ready for both suffering and happiness in old age.

This person comes into old age able to apply the Word of God to experience. Even his mind is saved, according to the principles of Romans 12:2. He realizes that there are many books, but only one Book, the mind of Christ, the Word of God.

The elderly believer uses the Faith-Rest principles of life. While the body is getting weaker, there is this promise of 2 Cor. 4:15.

"For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

#### Characteristics of a Beautiful Old Age

Review the following scripture passages to get a thorough understanding from Bible examples just what an exciting and productive old age can be like.

In 1 Tim. 5:5-10, there is the example of a widow alone who faces the occupational hazard of widowhood in loneliness. However, this woman trusts in God, uses the promises of the Bible, and keeps on praying. A widow who is "well reported for good works" is making the most out of old age.

In Acts 11:36-43 is the story of Dorcas, "full of good works", given to hospitality, who "washed the saints feet", made garments, relieved the afflicted with her nursing skills, and was a producer of divine good. She had mastered the details of life.

In Tim. 2:1,2 there is a discussion of the characteristics of godly elderly men. They are to be healthy minded, alert, sharp, with Christlike character, masters of the details of life ("temperate"), "sound in faith", having spiritual healthy because of doctrine, being free from mental attitude sins such as bitterness, envy, hostility, having mental attitude love.

In Tim. 2:3 ff are listed the characteristics of godly older women. Their shining inner beauty reflects the glory of God. They are not false accusers or guilty of maligning, evil speaking, or gossip, and they are not vindictive. They are also temperate and able to teach good things to the younger women. They had skill and wisdom and had the willing attention of younger women. They taught the young women to be healthy



mind, emotionally stable, to have sound judgment, to be poised, in control of themselves, thoughtful, to be free from carnality ("chaste"), to be morally good, and to respond to their husbands.

From these illustrations we conclude that there is plenty to do in old age, that old age can be a golden age, not necessarily in reliving the "good old days", but in actively enjoying the present and the future.

### **Occupation with Christ**

#### **Introduction**

The Lord has made available many provisions for living according to His plan and growing in Christ. These provisions are known variously as "divine operating assets", "techniques for Christian living", "problem solving devices", and so forth.

These provisions are part of the great store of blessings which God has already made available to us in Christ.

Eph. 1:3, "And has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

These provisions include:

Confession of Sin

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

Faith-Rest

Orientation to Grace

Personal Love for God

Impersonal Love for Mankind

Joy - the happiness of God which does not depend on people, circumstances, or things

A personal destiny shared with all in God's royal family

This article deals with the subject of Occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, under the following headings:

- \* What is Occupation with Christ
- \* Why a Christian Needs to be Occupied with Christ
- \* The Bible Commands Regarding Occupation with Christ

\* Mechanics - How to be Occupied with Christ

\* The Results of Occupation with Christ

#### **What is Occupation with Christ**

Occupation with Christ is a mental attitude by which a Christian believer views all things in life with the Lord Jesus Christ in mind.

Occupation with Christ is love for the Son, the 2nd Person of the Trinity, therefore it is the expression of love for God. The Bible commands us to love God, with all our heart, soul and mind. Being occupied with Christ is a great part of our love for God. Therefore, this concept is one of the most important spiritual functions in the Christian life.

Love for God, and Occupation with Christ, results from learning, digesting, and applying Bible truth. The Bible describes the lifestyle of wisdom and the path to spiritual maturity through the filling of the Holy Spirit and growth in Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is invisible to us because He is in heaven, seated at the right hand of God. He will not become visible to us until we see Him when He returns. So, loving Christ requires a system of communications which is based on thought. The system is the Word of God, God's thoughts and God's words, guarded in the Scripture. There is no other accurate record of the mind of Christ, divine viewpoint, apart from what is contained in the Bible.

Therefore, we can only come to love Jesus Christ, to be occupied with Christ, through learning the Word of God and making His thoughts our thoughts.

1 Cor. 2:16, For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

This love for Jesus Christ can only come about through applied Bible truth.

Eph. 3:19, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

1 Pet. 1:8, and though you have not seen Him, you love Him [occupation with Christ], and though you do not see Him now, but believe in

Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

Joy and occupation with Christ always go together, you can't have one without the other. The glory with which you are filled is Bible truth, and this emphasizes the fact that you have come to know Christ through perception and application of the Word of God.

#### Difference Between Indwelling of Christ and Occupation with Christ

The Indwelling of Christ is not an experience. Every Christian, whether a novice or advanced believer, is indwelt by Christ, has been since the point of salvation, and always will be. You find this teaching in John 14:20; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; and 1 John 2:24.

Christ indwells believers for a number of reasons: (1) as a sign that a Christian is a member of God's royal family, (2) as a guarantee of the blessings which we have for time and eternity, (3) as a guarantee of eternal life and a life after death in the presence of God, (4) as a motivation for us to stay in the plan of God, especially when we experience suffering.

Occupation with Christ, though, is one of the processes leading to Christian maturity, and not all believers experience this. Occupation with Christ is the focus of all worship. When you worship God "in spirit and in truth" you are occupied with Christ.

Occupation with Christ is the main motivation in a Christian's life. And it is the prime solution to all the problems of life. Only positive believers who choose to follow the plan of God are occupied with Christ.

The following are expressions of the process of being occupied with Christ. Notice in each case how the Christian is involved in a thought and decision process leading to occupation with Christ.

"Christ being formed in you..." (Gal. 4:19)

"Christ at home in your hearts..." (Eph. 3:17)

"Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Phil. 1:20).

Occupation with Christ makes an issue out of knowledge of the Word of God, setting right priorities, being involved and active in the plan of God, and glorifying God during a Christian's lifetime.

#### Characteristics of Occupation with Christ

1. Jesus Christ is God; so, occupation with Christ is the greatest expression of love toward God, the objective of all Christians.

Deut. 6:5, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

2. Occupation with Christ becomes the means for making great decisions with an impact on history.

Heb. 11:27, "Moses gave up the crown of Egypt. He became strong under pressure, for he saw the invisible One."

3. Occupation with Christ begins as the believer moves toward spiritual maturity, Col. 3:15-17.

4. Occupation with Christ glorifies Him, Eph. 3:17-21

5. Occupation with Christ means that human beings are not raised on pedestals, Phil. 3:7,8.

6. The means of continuing to be occupied with Christ is the daily learning and application of Bible teaching while under the control of the Holy Spirit, Jer. 9:23,24.

7. Occupation with Christ is a pastor's prime motivation to teach the Bible so that believers grow in Christ, Heb. 6:10.

8. Occupation with Christ is related to victory in spiritual warfare with Satan and his angels. With your mind in the right place, you are confident of victory, Col. 3:1,2.

#### The Need for Occupation with Christ

Psalm 118:9 tells us, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes." If you take refuge in the Lord, you stop expecting things from people. Your fellowship with God solves the problems that you have with people, and makes your relationships with people far better.

A person is seldom treated the way he wants to be treated, or loved the way he wants to be loved. Outside of God's plan, this can cause frustration and instability.

This frustration becomes a major motivation in life and leads people on a frantic search for fellowship with people, instead of fellowship with God. Until a person becomes stabilized in his thinking, by occupying himself with Christ, he will be very unstable. People select their companions, their spouses, even their churches, based on the desire to be loved and treated properly.

Most of the time, people don't find what they are looking for, so they become bitter, and indulge themselves in jealousy, envy, vindictiveness, hatred, and revenge, and are very disappointed in all categories of life.

Occupation with Christ brings about a change in priorities in a Christian's life. Proper focus on Christ takes care of the problems of friendships, romance, marriage, business, or social life, and the problems that are caused by constant friction with people in all situations. Love for God and for Christ takes the place of frustration and bitterness with people.

Impersonal love, which is the professional attitude of a mature believer toward all people, provides a capacity for wonderful relationships with people in Christian fellowship, friendship, and marriage.

#### The Problems of Focusing on Self, People, Things

Jer. 17:5,6 Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. For he will be like a bush in the desert, and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.

Three great problems develop through failure to be occupied with Christ. The first problem is to have a focus on self. This is arrogance, or an overestimation of one's self. When you are indignant, or offended, or angered by the way you are treated, your eyes are on yourself. You are frustrated and bitter, and you become vengeful. You make bad decisions from a position of weakness.

The second problem of wrong focus is to have one's eyes on people. We tend to put our trust in

people in many different relationships. We think people are causing our problems, and we look to other people to solve our problems. We try to find people who are compatible, but are always be disappointed in them.

There is nothing wrong with having relationships with people. In fact, they are unavoidable. But we will always be disappointed by people until we have a personal love for God, occupation with Christ, and an impersonal love for all people. This spiritual outlook is the source of pure joy and the enjoyment of a personal sense of eternal accomplishment.

You can't change other people, even your spouse. When you try, it only intensifies the problem. What you are doing is making an issue out of yourself instead of Christ's teaching. The only person you can change is yourself; and you cannot do that by executing some sort of psychological program for your life. Personal change comes only through growth in Christ and using the assets that God has provided for solving the problems of life.

The third problem caused by failure to be occupied with Christ is a focus on things. Sometimes when you're not being treated properly, you decide to sublimate in some way by buying something, going somewhere, seeking out recreation. If you can't get away, or you can't afford your dream package, you spend your life filled with fantasy or wanderlust.

Occupation with Christ provides a new focus on life, away from self, people, and things. When you have spiritual self-esteem, it doesn't matter how you are treated, whether you are loved or not loved, or whether you get what you want. It is your fellowship with Christ that counts!

God is perfect and can only treat you within the scope of His perfection. Within God's plan, you will be treated in a manner that is most beneficial to you, with the proper combination of pleasure and suffering, joy and sorrow, social life and solitude, a combination of blessing and testing to bring you to maturity.

So, how you are treated by people, or by life itself, is no longer an issue. You are living a life

of love for Christ as your motivational solution. You have impersonal love for people as part of your functional integrity. The Lord gives you victory over hurt, anger, hatred, frustration, or antagonism toward people, even in the midst of some of the greatest expressions of frustration.

You have yourself been changed through the Word of God. You can pass all forms of testing without being destroyed. You are well positioned to conduct a powerful personal ministry for Christ, being free from the self-generated problems to which most people are subject.

**The Bible Commands Us to be Occupied with Christ**

Occupation with Christ is commanded by God; it is not an option. If you are going to live the Christian life according to God's plan, you must come to the place where you are occupied with Christ.

Deut. 6:5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

This verse shows that it is God's will that we be absorbed with Him in our whole being: heart, soul, and might. This means the Word of God must be our top priority. To love God - to love the Lord Jesus Christ - we must know Him. We learn about Christ, the Living Word, through the Bible, the written Word. The written Word and the Living Word eventually become our main focus in life. A Christian cannot enter spiritual adulthood (maturity) without this dual priority in life.

Christians who are not occupied with Christ will always be novices, spiritual immature, and dabblers in the faith.

Heb. 12:2, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus Christ is the author and perfecter of our faith (our doctrine). Furthermore, the Bible is the "mind of Christ", the actual thinking of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16)

The word "joy" in Heb. 12:2 refers to the happiness of the Lord Jesus as he endured the suffering of the Cross, when He was being judged for our sins. We don't usually think of happiness associated with Christ's suffering, but this was the pure joy, in Christ's case, of his being 100% occupied with the Father and with His plan.

1 Pet. 3:15, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

This verse is a command to be occupied with Christ. The "heart" is the place in the soul where wisdom and applied Bible knowledge reside. We "sanctify" Christ in our hearts by having maximum understanding and application of Bible truth. By consistent learning of the Word, under conditions of spiritual fellowship (control of the Holy Spirit), a believer sanctifies Christ as Lord in the heart.

**Mechanics - How To Be Occupied with Christ**

You have probably already seen that occupation with Christ is accomplished through having regular interaction with the Word of God. The #1 priority is concentration on Bible truth, and organizing one's life around that #1 priority. When you do that, you are concentrating on Christ, you are occupied with Christ.

To concentrate on the Word, you must receive consistent accurate teaching from a pastor-teacher. In Eph. 4:11-16, we see that the method God the Father has chosen to bring us to maturity as individuals, and to have a mature, productive church, is Bible teaching from men who are prepared to minister (preach) the Word of God.

You must listen and learn many things from the Bible. Some of them will seem to have no immediate application, but all Bible knowledge is important in God's plan for your life. If you stay with it, the pieces will begin to fit together and it will all make sense.

If your top priority is Bible truth, your life will begin to change almost without your knowing it. You will learn doctrine every day, and you will

begin to use the problem solving techniques that the Bible offers. Your mental attitude will be determined by the divine thinking that is coming into your soul.

When the Word of God is the main focus of your life, you come to the point of personal love for God the Father. You will have spiritual self-esteem. Once you begin to have love for God, and to be occupied with Christ, you will no longer feel threatened by things in life that once disturbed you. You have a relaxed mental attitude and spiritual joy, which is happiness supplied by God that you have regardless of circumstances, things, or the people in your life. This process is demonstrated in 1 Peter 1:6-8.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof (genuineness) of your faith (doctrine), being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

and though you have not seen Him (Jesus Christ), you love Him (occupation with Christ), and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

In other words, you begin to function by using the Word of God during times of testing, at the same time as you are occupied with Christ. You are actually sharing the happiness of God as you go through life.

#### The Results of Occupation with Christ

Occupation with Christ is the principal solution to all problems that occur in life. God the Father has provided us with everything necessary for us to have a capacity for joy and a prosperity that is independent of people or circumstances. These provisions are known as "all blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Note that the place of blessing is in Christ. All blessings, and all problem solutions begin with Occupation with Christ.

Occupation with Christ glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. 3:19-21)

Occupation with Christ is required in order to have complete fellowship with God the Father. I John 1:6. Walking "in darkness" is the opposite of occupation with Christ.

In 2 Cor. 13:14, the "practice of truth" is fellowship with God the Father; and fellowship with God always leads to love for God.

I Cor. 1:9 indicates that fellowship with Christ is concurrent with, and necessary for, fellowship with God. Since you were "called into fellowship with His Son," this should be your main priority in life. But this means that you have to make the Word of God your main interest in life.

Fellowship with God the Holy Spirit is also closely tied in with occupation with Christ. Phil. 2:1,2 "Therefore, if there be any encouragement in Christ, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship with the Spirit, if there is any affection mercies, complete my happiness by thinking the same things."

God's happiness is completed as we have fellowship with Him, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Then we can have true fellowship with people, without putting people before God. 2 Cor. 13:14 "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love for God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." But without occupation with Christ, interaction with other people is often bad.

Occupation with Christ, therefore, eliminates the superficiality of human hero worship. Phil. 3:7,8 "...I count all things but loss except for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord..."

As you become occupied with Christ, you have a stronger motivation to have a relationship with the Lord, and you change gradually from dependence on people to dependence on the Lord. You cannot change people; it is God who causes people to change, to grow up. And no one is fully grown up who is not making use of occupation with Christ. The key to God's plan is that we no longer live for ourselves but for Christ.

2 Cor. 5:14-17 For the love of Christ continues to motivate us, in that One died for all; therefore, all have died. And He died as a substitute for all, in order that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and was resurrected...

Occupation with Christ brings spiritual self-esteem and self-confidence. You have self-esteem when you stop competing with people and undermining them. You stop slandering, gossiping, maligning, and judging other people. You have impersonal (professional) love for other people, because you are occupied with Christ. You live in grace, and you are a conduit of grace to other people, because Christ has become formed in your thinking and you love Him above everything else. The result is 2 Cor. 5:14 "The Lord for Christ motivates..."

Occupation with Christ is the Basis for Production and Blessing

It is the means by which mature believers contribute to national blessing (blessing by association). Deut. 30:15-20.

It produces courage and victory in battle, Jer. 23:10,11.

It is the basis for strength during testing, Psalm 31:23,24.

It results in great blessings, Psalm 37:4,5.

It provides strength under pressure, Heb. 11:27.

It helps the Christian avoid fatigue in the soul, Heb. 12:3.

#### Summary Remarks

Occupation with Christ is the ultimate function and outlook of the Christian way of life. It is the only answer to unrealistic expectations in life, which include not being treated the way you think you should be treated, and not being loved the way you think you should be loved.

Occupation with Christ is the main problem solving feature of Christian living, and it is the key to all other solutions which God's plan provides.

Occupation with Christ proceeds through three phases as the Christian grows in Christ. First, "Christ is formed in you", Gal. 4:19. As a result, "the love for Christ motivates us." 2 Cor. 5:14

Second, occupation with Christ is characterized as "Christ at home in your hearts", Eph. 3:17, resulting in "setting apart the Lord Christ in your hearts", 1 Pet. 3:15.

Third, in spiritual maturity, "Christ is exalted in my body, whether by life or by death," Phil. 1:20. The result "for me, living is Christ and dying is profit," Phil. 1:21.

Phil. 3:7-10, "Whatever things were gain to me, I have concluded them loss for the sake of Christ, I conclude all things to be loss because of the surpassing greatness of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, my Lord, because I have suffered the loss of all things, and I now consider then dung in order that I may gain Christ. And that I may be demonstrated in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. That I may know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Christ in the fellowship of His death."

#### Peace with God; The Peace of God

The word "peace" in the Bible, from the Greek word (eireinei), refers to a mental attitude of tranquility based on a relationship with God in the Christian Way of Life. It is a word which describes the result of a person's correct response to God's Grace.

The Bible uses "peace" in two ways. There is personal peace with God which comes when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Then, there is the peace of God which is available on a daily basis as the believer participates in the Christian way of life according to the Plan of God.

So, where you find peace mentioned in the Bible it refers either to the reconciliation of a Christian in salvation, as in Eph. 2:14,17, or to the mental attitude found in the believers.

2 Tim. 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

PEACE WITH GOD - Peace in Salvation

Peace with God is never available apart from Grace. The Cross of Christ is the focal point of Grace and is the source of Peace. Jesus Christ is our eternal Peace.

Romans 5:1 "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

God in Grace removed the Barrier and made peace between man and God. So, when the unbeliever responds to Grace by faith, the result is Peace.

Ephesians 2:14-18 provides a good illustration of how God made it possible for anyone to have peace with God, with special emphasis on the fact that such different types as Jews and Gentiles have been provided for.

Verse 14 deals with peace as a product of reconciliation. Verse 15 explains that the "enmity" between God and man, that which we call the Barrier, was "abolished" once and for all. Verses 16 to 18 explain that the enmity has been slain for both Jews and Gentiles so that now those who were near to God, the Jews, and those who were far off, non-Jews, have been brought into union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

#### Peace in the Christian Way of Life

In our lifetime we can experience Peace on a daily basis. When the believer responds by faith to Grace, God provides many blessings which can result in great inner happiness.

Isaiah 26:3,4 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength."

In the Christian Way of life, peace comes through fellowship with God and daily growth, advancement in spiritual things which brings stability, a relaxed mental attitude, orientation to the plan of God, occupation with Christ, and the ability to employ faith-rest principles in all areas of life.

Philippians 4:6-9 "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes

all understanding, shall keep (garrison) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.

Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."

Peace, or tranquility, precedes the enjoyment of prosperity. It is part of the preparation for prosperity. One must have Peace to have the capacity for prosperity. God may hold prosperity back until there is the capacity to enjoy it.

Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, were multiplied."

#### READ Jeremiah 29:1-7

Any loss of peace is followed by adjustment to the plan of God (confession and restoration to fellowship), faith-rest, and relaxed mental attitude, and Peace in the new situation.

The man or woman who receive grace and peace from the Lord is in perfect position for spiritual production, and reproduction.

#### READ James 3:13-18.

#### Promotion

You're not promoted until God promotes you!

Luke 14:11, "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled. And he who humbles himself shall be promoted."

"Everyone who exalts himself" refers to the believer involved in self-promotion, degeneracy, and the lust pattern of the sin nature, the believer with vacuum in the subconscious.

The believer "is humbled" through the law of volitional responsibility, in which the believer takes the responsibility for his own bad decisions and responds well to divine discipline.

Humbling oneself involves several steps: First, confession of sin resulting in the control of the Holy Spirit; next, intake of Bible teaching through self-discipline in study; finally, many decisions to learn and apply doctrine to life.

There are two kinds of humility: self-imposed humility and spiritual humility. God only promotes on the basis of spiritual humility. You are not humble because you think you are humble or say you are humble.

James 4:10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will promote you."

Spiritual promotion is not related in any way to man promoting himself or being promoted by some other man.. All promotions in the Christian life are completely and totally fair, because all promotion is accomplished by God and God alone.

God does not promote anyone without humility. Humility only comes from knowledge of Bible truth and its correct application to the Christian life. You cannot make yourself humble; self-effacement is not humility.

1 Pet. 5:5-6, "God makes war against the arrogant [believer], but gives grace to the humble [believer]. Humble yourselves under the powerful hand of God that He may promote you at the proper time."

Humility and grace orientation are always related to grace promotion. This is because with humility comes teachability, and from teachability comes doctrinal orientation, and from doctrinal orientation comes grace orientation and execution of the plan of God.

Doctrinal orientation plus grace orientation equals promotion. Promotion implies the execution of the plan of God.

Promotion occurs through the distribution of blessings for both time and eternity by our Lord Jesus Christ. These blessings remain on deposit in heaven forever for every believer and are always available. Eph. 1:3.

Promotion implies that you have become grace oriented, which means he has capacity for every divine blessing associated with promotion. The arrogant believer involved in degeneracy can be

classified as one who is in high visibility carnality, a Christian who is self-promoting. The arrogance of self-promotion results in failure to execute God's plan.

The believer who lives in the world is always involved in self-promotion. The arrogance of the self-promotion results in failure to execute God's plan. This believer is classified as a loser.

Prov. 16:18, "Arrogance precedes destruction, and before a fall [there is] a lifestyle of destruction."

Prov. 11:2, "When arrogance comes, then comes dishonor. But with the humble there is wisdom."

Prov 29:23, "A person's arrogance will bring him low, but with the humble is wisdom."

Humility is something you have to acquire. No one is born humble, naturally humble, or humbled by their circumstances.

With humility, objectivity, and orientation to authority comes teachability. Teachability means doctrinal orientation. From doctrinal orientation comes grace orientation. Doctrinal orientation plus grace orientation equals promotion.

2 Cor. 10:18, "For not he who promotes [commends] himself is approved, but whom the Lord promotes."

Humility is related to the spiritual skills of the filling of the Holy Spirit; cognition of doctrine; and execution of the protocol plan of God.

#### Principles of Promotion

Never covet what God has not provided in grace.

The arrogant person becomes involved in the lust pattern of the sin nature and covets all kinds of things that God has not provided. But humility and grace orientation set aside the lust pattern through perception of doctrine, and therefore, develop a great capacity for life, love, happiness, and grace blessing from God. As we develop capacity, God provides more blessing and greater promotion.

No Church Age believer can be promoted without at least five things:

- \* Knowledge of the plan of God.



- \* Knowledge of our catalog of spiritual blessings - our logistical support.
- \* Knowledge of the unique characteristics of the Church Age.
- \* Understanding and using the problem solving devices for Christians in the Church Age.
- \* Understanding of principles of suffering for blessing and its contribution to spiritual momentum.

Promotion in the plan of God is based on applied doctrine in the soul and never comes from Christian service or good deeds.

Christian service and Christian works is the result of functioning within the plan of God, but never the means. of promotion Therefore, do not confuse means and result in the Christian life.

If God does not promote you, you are not promoted.

God promotes the humble believer who is classified as a grace oriented Christian. Humility is not self-effacement - putting yourself down.

Grace orientation comes through applying Bible doctrine, which can also be called cognition of Bible doctrine. Cognition is an act of process of learning or perception, hence, something known or perceived. We do not withdraw from this doctrine under stress, pressure, or adversity.

Divine promotion in the plan of God requires humility, authority orientation, objectivity, teachability, flexibility, and grace orientation. All of your thoughtfulness, tenderness, kindness, and love in life have to be based on motivation.

Promotion from God begins in spiritual adulthood. No believer is promoted until he or she reaches spiritual self-esteem. Spiritual adulthood has three stages:

- \* Spiritual self-esteem, which is self-confidence.
- \* Spiritual autonomy, which is independence.
- \* Spiritual maturity, which is invincibility.

When God can promote you, God is glorified. Promotion is always based upon the grace of

God, and when God acts in grace, He is glorified. Divine promotion is always fair.

The promoted believer has maximum historical impact in the Church Age toward people and angels.

### **Purity in the Christian Life**

The apostle Paul told Timothy, "Keep yourself pure...". Good advice for a young man in the ministry. And when you look at all of the passages in the Bible that have something to do with personal purity, you realize that this Christian characteristic has a prominent place in God's plan for the Christian believer.

Jesus Christ exalts purity to the realm of the spirit, a type of purity that is far greater than the ritual purity of ceremonial cleansing seen in Jewish and other religions. This paper is aimed at showing you what Christian purity is (and is not) and how you can grow to have this purity.

The New Testament Greek word for purity is *kaqaroV* (katharos). It is found in several New Testament passage, notably in Titus 1:15, "Unto the pure all things are pure..." *katharos* is the usual Greek word for purity and was used for several types of purity in the Greek world:

- \* Ceremonial purity of a physical object, such as a vessel in a temple
- \* Ceremonial purity of a temple worshipper
- \* Purity in the spiritual nature of a person

In the ancient world, ceremonial cleansing would have been by some ritual. In the New Testament, there is a deeper meaning: purity refers to the result of cleansing of the soul by God. In this context, purity is a characteristic of a believer in fellowship who has experienced the "cleansing from all unrighteousness" promised in 1 John 1:9 to the one who confesses sin to God.

Titus 1:15, Unto the pure all things are pure...

Reading this phrase, a cynical person may draw the wrong conclusion, namely that a totally pure person can touch anything or think about anything and remain pure as the driven snow. But this thinking involves lifting this phrase out

of the whole context of the Bible in order to make it meaningless and false.

This does not mean, "All things are pure in the judgment of the pure."

It's true that a pure-minded man will not usually put evil constructions or interpretations on things. But to say that something is pure because he judges it to be so, or because he cannot be defiled, is false. The context of Titus 1 makes it clear that the apostle Paul is referring to matters of Judaistic practice, ceremonial purifications, among other things, that have been misconstrued by false teachers.

Read the following passage from Luke 11:37-44.

"And as he spoke, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner.

"And the Lord said unto him, Now do you Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. You fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

"But woe unto you, Pharisees! for you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for you love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. "

Christ exalts purity to the realm of the spirit, which automatically does away with ceremonial purity. A pure mind cannot be contaminated by physical contact; and the purest minds will have no relish in seeking defilement.

The following passage in 1 Timothy 1:4-7 talks about love out of a pure heart, the fruit of the

Holy Spirit. This is not a ritual love, nor is it a love gained by striving for it. Here "good conscience" means "cleansed" or "in fellowship".

"Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

"Now the end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

"Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

Problems of impurity in life are attacked in the area of the mind. Timothy was commanded to "flee also youthful lusts...". But he was told in the same verse how to do this, to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. 2:22).

How often only the first part of the above verse is quoted, so that the believer never learns how to have victory over areas of weakness. Lust is desire - and desire is a mental attitude. So to "flee lusts" is to nip the sin problem in the bud, while it is still only in the mind. Confess, isolate, and forget the sin. Then, enjoy one more measure of victory.

1 Timothy 6:9-11

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

"But you O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."

1 Peter 1:18-23

"Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

"Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

"Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently:

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever. "

Salvation is not by ceremony, but by the sacrifice of Christ. Morality is not by ceremony, but by the purification of the soul through the Word of God.

What is Christ's purpose for the Church?

"...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. 5:25,26)

Purity is brought into the Christian's life and maintained through (1) Confession of sins which maintains fellowship with God and (2) edification, which is the basis for growth in all areas, including having victory over sin.

Related Topics: Confession; Sin; Godliness; Separation

### **Redemption**

Redemption is a comprehensive term used in the Bible to refer to the special intervention of God for the salvation of mankind. This use of the word deals with the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross in which He paid the price to "purchase" human beings and set them free from their slavery to sin. On account of Christ's substitutionary atonement, He is called the Redeemer.

There are other ideas closely related to the primary concept of redemption which relate to the necessity for redemption and its various

aspects and to the effects of the ministry of God's grace in the life of the Christian believer.

### **Old Testament Background and Typology**

#### **Redemption of Firstborn Sons, Firstlings of the Flock, Firstfruits**

The word "redemption" in the Old Testament is the translation of the Hebrew word (*pädäh*), meaning "to deliver" or "to sever". It was continuously stressed to the Israelites that they belonged to Jehovah because He had redeemed them (severed them from bondage) and had provided them with the land of Canaan for them to use as a gift from God and for His glory. For this reason, all Israel owed their lives and their service to God, in effect making the whole nation a kingdom of priests, at least in spirit.

However, only Levi and the descendants of his tribe, who became known as the priestly tribe, were actually set apart for the service of the tabernacle. Everyone else from the eleven other tribes was to be redeemed, or purchased, from service by redeeming the firstborn of both men and animals.

A son was considered "firstborn" if he was the first son born to his mother. If a man had more than one wife, each wife could have a firstborn son. Each firstborn son was presented to the Lord on the 40th day after his birth and redeemed by a payment of five shekels to the priests (Num. 18:16; Ex. 13:15; Luke 2:27).

The firstlings of oxen, sheep, and goats were to be brought to the sanctuary within a year and eight days after their birth, and sacrificed (Num. 18:17).

The firstborn of an ass, which was an unclean animal, was redeemed by sacrificing a sheep in its place; or, if not redeemed in this manner, was put to death itself (Ex. 13:12 ff; 34:20). Later, the law provided that the ass could be redeemed with money, the amount to be determined by the market value of the ass plus 20%, according to the priest's valuation (Lev. 27:27; Num. 18:15). (There is no more striking or succinct picture in the Bible that this analogy to Christian salvation issues.)

The firstfruits of the harvest were sacred to Jehovah because He is the Lord of the soil (Ex. 23:19). These were given to the priest to be presented in offering. The whole congregation was required to offer an annual thanksgiving offering at harvest time by presenting a firstfruits sheaf at the Passover. These were not to be burned but were to be given to the priests for their use, with the provision that only those priests who were ceremonially clean could eat the firstfruits. The amount of offering of firstfruits was not specified by the Law but was left to each person's discretion.

Later in Jewish history, the children of Israel began to be called the Redeemed of the Lord, after they had been set free from the Babylonian captivity (Isa. 35:9; 51:11; 62:12).

#### The Kinsman-Redeemer

According to the laws regarding punishment and retribution for crime, when a person was assaulted, robbed or murdered, it fell to the nearest kinsman to bring the criminal to justice and to protect the lives and property of relatives. This obligation was called "redeeming", and the man who was responsible for fulfilling this duty was known as a "redeemer" (Heb. go-el). The job of redeemer would fall to full brothers first, then to uncles who were the father's brothers, then to full cousins, and finally to the other blood relatives of the family (Lev. 25:48). The kinsman-redeemer of the Old Testament was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ as Redeemer. There were four requirements for the redeemer, both in the type and in Christ:

1. The redeemer must be a near kinsman. To fulfill this Christ took on human form.
2. The redeemer must be able to redeem. The price of man's redemption was the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
3. The redeemer must be willing to redeem (Heb. 10:4-10). Christ was willing to be our Redeemer.
4. The redeemer must be free from that which caused the need for redemption; that is, the redeemer cannot redeem himself. This was true of Christ, because He needed no redemption.

READ Ruth 3:9-13; 4:1-11.

The nation of Israel as a whole required a Redeemer to redeem the lands which had been taken over by foreign powers, so they looked to Jehovah to become their go-el. The period of exile gave an even greater force and meaning to the term "redeemer" than it had before; and the book of Isaiah contains nineteen of the thirty-three Old Testament references to God as Israel's covenant redeemer.

#### Redemption in the New Testament

##### Slavery to Sin

In the New Testament we see that all people are slaves because all are sold under sin and in spiritual bondage.

Rom. 7:14, "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin."

Acts 8:23 uses the phrase "the bond of iniquity".

READ John 8:31-36

READ Romans 6:12-18

See also Rom. 7:23; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Pet. 2:19.

Furthermore, all people are helplessly condemned to die.

Ezek. 18:4, "Behold, all souls are mine, saith the Lord. As the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sins, it shall die."

1 Cor. 15:22, "As in Adam all die..."

See also John 3:18, 36; Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10.

#### The Principle of Redemption

The principle of redemption, then, is the concept of bondage to the slavery of sin and freedom from its domination (John 8:31-36). To be redeemed means to be "purchased from slavery".

The Greek word (lutroo), means "to release for ransom; to liberate; to redeem". It comes from the word (luo) meaning "to loosen; to unbind; to set at liberty". It is used in -

1 Pet. 1:18,19, "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed (lutroo) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain

conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Titus 2:14, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem (lutroo) us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

The noun (lutron) means "the price paid; the ransom", as in -

Matt. 20:28, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom (lutron) for many."

Jesus Christ purchased our freedom; and His blood is the payment for the redemption. Psalm 34:22; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 John 1:7.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is man's Redeemer, and as such He is divinely appointed. The redemption that He brought represents both His own love and that of the Father for the whole world.

The word (agoradzo) means "to buy; to redeem; to acquire by paying ransom". Derived from agora, "marketplace".

1 Cor. 6:20, "For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This is analogous to the OT idea in which the Israelites owed their very existence to God.

Rev. 5:9, "And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

See also 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 14:3.

The word (exagoradzo) means "to buy out of the hands of a person; to redeem; to set free".

Gal. 3:13, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree."

The word (apolutrosis) means "to dismiss for ransom paid; redemption".

1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Rom. 3:23,24, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

Eph. 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."

Heb. 9:15, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Rom. 8:22,23, "For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

Eph. 1:13,14, "In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom after you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

#### Some Implications of the Doctrine of Redemption

Redemption is the basis of our eternal inheritance. See Eph. 1:13,14 and Heb. 9:15 above.

Redemption is the basis of justification. Rom. 3:23, 24 (above).

Redemption includes the total forgiveness of sins; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.

Redemption results in adoption.

Gal. 4:4-6, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive

the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

The doctrine of redemption is used to orient believers in time of stress.

Job 19:25, "I know that my Redeemer liveth..."

At the point of redemption we can have peace of mind, stability, a relaxed mental attitude by knowing the doctrine and that God has paid for and provided for everything.

### **Separation**

The Christian Believer in the World System

The ability to stand alone for that which is right is one of the truest signs of maturity in the Christian life. It is the sign that one has openly identified himself with a superior way of life - with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When a person takes a stand, he is saying to others that he has something worth standing for. This type of commitment attracts followers and is one of the primary characteristics of a good leader.

One of the strongest pressures against being true to the Word of God comes from friends who have compromised their own standards or who have rejected Christ's standards in some way. The most serious consequence of not taking a stand is that the Word of God is not upheld by the believer's testimony. The Bible has a great deal to say about the believer's obligation to separate from people who knowingly and willfully disobey the Lord.

Separate yourself from those who are doctrinally disorderly.

I Tim. 6:3-5. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness: He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself."

II Tim 3:1-5. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

Avoid those who cause divisions and offense.

Romans 16:17,18. "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."

Separate from the world.

John 15:19 "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Separate from the works of darkness.

Eph. 5:11,12 "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."

Separate from Christians walking disorderly.

II Thess. 3:6 "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

Those who would not repent were excommunicated.

Matt. 18:15-17 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but

if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

Titus 3:9-11 "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."

Separate from false teachers.

II John v. 10 "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:"

Col. 2:8 "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Prov. 19:27 "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

Prov. 14:6-8 "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth. Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit."

Psalms 1:1. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Separate from the sinful activities of the unbeliever.

I Cor. 5:9-11

I Kings 11:12

II Cor. 6:14

II Chron. 19:2

Heb. 13:13

Ex. 34:12

I Pet. 4:1-5

Prov. 1:10-19; 4:14; 24:1

Num. 33:55

The Christian's main goals in life should be occupation with the Lord Jesus Christ, conformity to His image, and fulfilling the Plan of God for his life. The believer must make careful decisions about his purpose in life. Then, he must compare every activity in his life with his goals to see whether the activity helps or hinders him in reaching the goals.

The following notes provide examples of the uses of the word *aforizw* (separation) in the Bible:

Matt. 13:49-51, the wicked are separated from the righteous at the final judgment.

Matt. 25:31-46, the sheep are separated from the goats.

Are you one of the righteous? How do you know? Can you explain to a friend how he can be one of the sheep instead of one of the goats?

Luke. 6:22, the righteous man is ostracized by the worldly.

Acts 13:2, Barnabas and Saul (Paul) were separated to the work of the ministry.

2 Cor. 6:17, "touch not the unclean thing."

Gal. 1:15, Paul separated from his mother's womb.

Gal. 2:12, Peter wrongfully separated himself from Gentiles for fear of the opinion of the Jews.

### **Servants and Slaves in Palestine**

Some people, called "hirelings", were employed for wages in ancient Palestine (Job 7:1; 14:6; Mark 1:20). But most of the servants of the Israelites, as well as those of other eastern peoples of Old Testament times, were slaves or indentured servants - men and women who were held as property for various reasons and for various lengths of time. Some slaves were bought from neighboring nations or from foreign residents of Canaan. Some were captives taken in war. Some were children of slaves who were born in the house of the master. A slave might himself be a Hebrew who, through poverty, sold himself into servitude until he got back on his feet.

Slavery among the Hebrews was usually a mild and merciful system. The Bible, while it

recognizes that slavery exists, does not approve or disapprove of the practice. Numerous standards were set up in the Law for the regulation of slavery and servitude, with laws which regulated both the conditions and the duration of the bondage.

One source of slavery was absolutely forbidden. It was punishable by death to steal or kidnap a human being for the purpose of making him a slave or to sell him to someone else as a slave. This regulation applied to Israelite and foreigner alike.

Deut. 24:7, "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and makes merchandise of him, or sells him; then that thief shall die; and you shall put evil away from among you."

Exo. 21:16, "And he that steals a man, and sells him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall be surely put to death."

#### THE TREATMENT OF SERVANTS

Each Israelite was considered to be a servant of God. Therefore, he was not to be treated as a bondservant but as a hired worker; and his master was to rule over him with kindness .

Lev. 25:39-41, "And if thy brother that dwells by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant; But as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee: And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return."

There were several ways that a Hebrew could become the servant of his brethren:

- The Israelite, through poverty, might become unable to manage his own affairs or to maintain himself as an independent citizen. In this case he might pass by sale under the power of another. The passage in Lev. 25:39 ff, which lays down the law in these matters, does not imply that such a sale was compulsory. It is understood to mean that the individual sold

himself (or rather, he sold the rights to his labor) to another Jew, so that he might be able to earn subsistence for himself and his family.

- A Hebrew who had been convicted of theft was required to make restitution to the extent of at least double the value of the amount stolen if the stolen property itself was recovered). In other cases he was to pay four or five times as much as he stole (Note the case of Zacchaeus). If the thief could not make the required restitution, he was sold for his theft and he made restitution by his labor.

Exod. 22:1-3, "If a man shall steal ...If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft."

- Children of a Hebrew servant became, by condition of their birth, the servants of the master (Exod. 21:4).
- When a man was claimed personally by a creditor, his children were usually sold into bondage with him. While the impoverished man might sell himself into servitude, it was only to work off his debt until the jubilee year. 2 Kings 4:1; Neh. 5:5; Isa. 50:1; Job 24:9.

Every Israelite, male or female, who had become a slave, might be redeemed at any time by relatives or friends by the payment of what was owed. In any case, even if he were not redeemed, he was to be released after six years of service; and he was to be given a present of food and cattle (Exod. 21:2; Deut. 15:12-15). If he brought a wife into service with him, she was to be freed with him. However, if his master had provided him with a wife, the master could require the wife to stay when the man left. And the children of such a marriage stayed with the master (Exod. 21:3; Jer. 34:8 ff).

If the Hebrew servant, for love of his wife and children or other reason, preferred not to accept freedom in the seventh year (or when his obligation was completed), he was brought before the elders of the community and had his ear pierced as a token of his willingness to give lifelong servitude to his master (Exod. 21:6; Deut. 15:17).



If a Jew were to become the slave of a Gentile, the servitude could be terminated in two ways. First, it could be terminated by the arrival of the year of jubilee. Second, the servant could be released by payment to the master of the purchase price LESS the value of the services rendered, based upon the pay scale of a hired laborer (Lev. 25:47-55).

During the time that the slave was "possessed" by his master, the master had certain power of disposing of him as he would other articles of personal property. He could, for example, leave the servant to his heirs. The servant was said to have a certain monetary value, that is, his labor had a money value; but he was not supposed to be thought of as chattel.

A slave could be freed in one of four ways:

- By redemption through the payment of money or goods.
- By manumission, a bill or ticket of freedom issued by the master.
- By testamentary disposition; the master could specify that the slave was to be freed upon the master's death, for example.
- By any act that implied that the slave was a free citizen, such as making an heir of one's slave.

The Law had several means for the protection of slaves or servants. A servant was entitled to full religious privilege and access to all religious functions and practices, such as sacrifices, Passover and other feasts, circumcision, etc. He was to be given a day of rest on the Sabbath. He was to receive his liberty if the case of some grievous injury such as loss of eye or limb. See other passages: Gen. 17:12; Exod. 12:44; 20:11; 21:20,26,27; Lev. 24:17,22; Deut. 5:14 ff; 12:12,18.

### **Volitional Responsibility**

by Mark Perkins

The Law of Volitional Responsibility: People who choose for God are blessed; those who choose against Him suffer.

The Law of Volitional responsibility is well documented by Scripture.

Job 4:8-9, "As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. At the breath of God they are destroyed; at the blast of his anger they perish.

Prov 11:18, "The wicked man earns deceptive wages, but he who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

1. The deceptive wages are the result of bad decisions.
2. The deceptive wages shortchange the work of sin, making sin never worth it.

Prov 22:8, "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble, and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

Hosea 8:7, ""They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. The stalk has no head; it will produce no flour. Were it to yield grain, foreigners would swallow it up.

Hosea 10:12, "Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

2 Cor 9:6, "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Gal 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

James 3:18 "Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

The law of volitional responsibility is a built in function of divine discipline (see below). It is a law as universal as gravity, and no less impressive in its effects.

The law of volitional responsibility can be summed up in the phrase, "You will reap what you sow." This means that the seeds that you

plant in bad decisions will grow up to cause suffering in your life.

In the law of volitional responsibility, the suffering is always appropriate to the original bad decision.

1. If the decision is in the realm of finance, then you will suffer financially.
2. If the decision is in the realm of romance, then you will suffer romantically.
3. If the decision is in the realm of social life, then you will suffer socially.
4. If the decision is in the realm of your chosen profession, then you will suffer professionally.

In the law of volitional responsibility, bad decisions, like crime, never pay. You never 'get away' with a bad decision. You never slip a fast one by God, even on a small scale.

In the law of volitional responsibility, good decisions never go unnoticed by the omnipresence of God.

There will always be a difference between right and wrong. Always to eternity.

Choosing right over wrong will always be important.

### **Worry**

This article is a discussion of the mental attitude sin of Worry. We are not dealing with those natural concerns which all of us face in life when things are not going right, such as when someone is ill, or absent, or in danger.

What we are talking about is Worry as a failure to understand God's provision for us and His promises, failure to "cast our care on Him", because He cares for us, resulting in unnecessary soulful torment or anxiety or a disquieting and painful state of mind involving undue concern over something in life.

Such worry always anticipates the worst, and so becomes apprehension or anticipation of danger, misfortune, trouble, or uncertainty. Worry is a state of restlessness and agitation, producing mental disturbance, uneasiness, foreboding, anxiety, and painful uncertainty.

Worry is a destroyer of the soul. If unchecked, it results in great anxiety or even mental illness. You get a warning first, often with a physical problem. Worry in the mind causes shock to the body, Prov 12:25.

Bad news causes worry, Jer 49:23ff.

Worry causes hysteria, Lk. 10:41. All people have areas in which they are prone to worry.

People cause worry. People are always worried about other people. Worriers have to have an object, 1 Sam 10:2. You can always find an object if you really want to worry.

Economic disaster is a cause of worry, Jer. 44:16.

Worry leads to backsliding and the sin unto death, Ezek 4:15-17, 12:18-19, Isa 57:11.

Sin causes worry. People worry about sin which causes guilt, Ps 38:18.

Worry can be a sin, Rom 14:23. Christians are commanded to stop worrying, Lk 12:29.

Worry does not solve problems, Matt. 6:25,34.

Worry distracts from Bible teaching, Matt 13:22; Luke 8:14.

Therefore, blessing from God includes freedom from worry.

Jer 17:7-8, "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord."

This verse teaches the difference between a growing and a mature believer.

Worry is forbidden, Phil 4:6-7.

Ask God in prayer for anything. When you get Bible teaching under your belt you won't worry so much anyway,

1 Sam 17:47; Ps 55:22; Isa 26:3-4; 1 Pet 5:7.