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What is His Name? El Shaddai

Joel Portman

We have been noticing that God has revealed Himself and His character by the names that He has chosen to represent Him. It seems that those names that He employs are chosen to strengthen the confidence of believers and to disturb those who reject or ignore Him. We find that to be true in this name that depicts the character of God as the One who is all-sufficient and capable to meet every need, and who is also the One who will judge the unbeliever in the expression of His power. This is His name, **El-Shaddai**.

El Shaddai

This name is usually translated "God almighty" (Gen. 28:3), or "Almighty God" (Gen. 17:1) in most translations of the Bible. Sometimes this is shortened to "The Almighty" as in Gen. 49:25 and in every occurrence in Job. Perhaps, since it is found so frequently in the early books of our Bible (accepting that Job is an early book), we would likely conclude that it is one of the primary names by which God has made Himself known. This seems to be reinforced by Ex. 6:3, where God says, "*And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.*" It is a name by which the ungodly prophet Balaam spoke of Him (Num. 24:3-4, 16) as well as Job's "miserable" comforters (Job 5:17, thus suggesting that this name was widely known and recognized among the people.

While it is often linked with God acting in blessing and displaying mercy toward His people, this name also carries with it the thought of His omnipotent power to chastise and judge, as in Joel 1:15, Isa. 13:6, Ps. 68:14 as well as is suggested in some of the references in Job. So it presents to us the One who is of infinite power to act according to His will and without the restraints of man's weakness or resistance. Nor does He need man's help in order to accomplish His will. We see this emphasized in the first

reference of our Bible, where Abraham is thus addressed by God Almighty at the moment of his complete inability to fulfill God's promise regarding a son (Gen. 17:1). At that moment of utter weakness, he being 99 years old, God multiplied His promises and bound Himself to fulfill them by a covenant that depended solely on God's ability and purpose. This, in itself, should enhance the confidence of the believer in His God in the face of our inability, as well as to instill reverence and awe in our hearts.

Meaning of El-Shaddai

Some writers have taught that the title signifies God as a devastator, but as Stevenson has pointed out, "This name would add practically nothing to Elohim, which declares Him to be the Mighty God." Some would seek to link it with a word that is not found in Hebrew, but which would signify El-Shaddai as the God of the Mountains, but there is nothing in any biblical reference to give this suggestion. Rather, the context of every reference to this name seems to emphasize the character of God as One who is all-powerful and all-sufficient. Brown, Driver and Briggs's lexicon gives its meaning as "almighty, most powerful" and says that it is related to a root word that means "to deal violently with, despoil, devastate, ruin, destroy, spoil." This is also the meaning that Keil and Delitzsch gives it (*Commentary on the Old Testament*). Jerome translated it as "omnipotens" (or almighty) in the Latin Vulgate translation. Girdlestone (*Old Testament Synonyms*) says that Shaddai indicates "the fulness and riches of God's grace, and would remind the Hebrew reader that from God cometh every good and perfect gift, — that He is never weary of pouring forth His mercies upon His people, and that He is more ready to give than they are to receive."

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Girdlestone also points out something that other writers have seen in the name, and that is that “the word is connected with a root which signifies “a breast,” and hence the word is similar to that contained in our word, ‘exuberance.’ Perhaps the expressive word ‘bountiful’ would contain the sense most exactly.” This is the meaning that seems to be emphasized in the references that we encounter in Genesis 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, etc. In Gen. 49:25, Jacob blessed his son, Joseph, by saying, *“Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb.”* He says that in this reference, “breasts” is the word ‘shad’ which is closely related to ‘shaddai.’ These passages appear to establish the fact that whilst the name El sets forth the Might of God, the title Shaddai points to the inexhaustible stores of His Bounty.”

Strauss, in his book, (*Knowing God*), agrees that the word indicates the thought of the sustaining care and mercy of the Lord to His children. “All that a mother is to her baby, El-Shaddai is to His own children. He is the Mighty One, the believer’s Sufficiency, Sustenance, Strength, and Satisfaction.” He quotes G. Campbell Morgan as saying, “To gather sustenance and consolation from the bosom of God is to be made strong for the pilgrimage.” Again Dr. Morgan says that it indicates that God is “the mighty One of Resource or Sufficiency. We should reach the idea better by rendering ‘God All-bountiful,’ or ‘God All-sufficient.’”

It is in the promise of God to Abraham in Gen. 17:1 that this is aptly emphasized. Naturally speaking, it had become completely impossible for Abraham, as well as Sarah, to conceive a child. Natural ability was past; human potential had ceased, nothing was left from their point of view, since other efforts, including the use of Hagar, had come to naught. We learn from Rom. 4:19-21 and Heb. 11:11, that deadness on their part was all that remained. The situation was desperate and impossible, if anything depended on their ability. It was in the sphere of their insufficiency that God moved to prove His sufficiency, not by assisting them to achieve the promised seed by their own ability, but entirely by the intervening hand of God to fulfill His purposes. He, as the Giver and Sustainer of Life, intervened by His own power to bring this birth to pass. That is not to set aside the human aspect of the work, but it would never have taken place had it not been for God accomplishing it.

That same thought of God as the Sustainer and All-sufficient One is expressed in other references in Genesis. It is in the blessing of Isaac to Jacob in Gen. 28:1-4 when Jacob was leaving home, fleeing from the face of Esau in fear. As a weak man, he needed the encouragement of knowing that his sufficiency wasn’t in himself but in the

presence and power of God. When Jacob returned from Laban (Gen. 35:9-12), God revealed Himself by the same name to reinforce His obedience to God’s command to return to his own land without fear. God was the same at the end of his prolonged exile as He was at the beginning, unchanging in His character and purpose to bless His own in their weakness. That command in Gen. 35 is also accompanied by God’s word for Jacob to be “fruitful and multiply” and it was from the One who was the Sustainer in His all-sufficiency. Jacob continued to express the same when he conveyed the blessing to his son Joseph in Gen. 49.

We learn something of the blessedness and security of a believer who enjoys the presence of this God when we read in Ps. 91:1, *“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* This abiding place is the place of fruitfulness and contentedness. How good to be there!

The Discipline of El-Shaddai

Yet, the other aspect of this name is suggested in Naomi’s words in Ruth 1:20-21, when she says, *“Call me not Naomi (pleasant), call me Mara (bitterness), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me . . . the Almighty hath afflicted me.”* She had experienced the fact that God’s desire to produce fruitfulness cannot be realized when one is in the wrong place, acting contrary to His will. She had experienced complete unfruitfulness and dissatisfaction in Moab, but the hand of the Almighty had moved and the little book of Ruth ends with Naomi enjoying fruitfulness in Ruth and contentment as well.

Job also experienced the “arrows of the Almighty” in his trials which God allowed (Job 6:4, 23:16). He, like us, failed to understand the Divine side of his experiences and complained in the bitterness of his soul. We would also have done the same, if we had been in his position! Job, knowing the kindness and beneficence of El-Shaddai, was confused by realizing that it was He who was allowing or causing his afflictions, so thus we find him accusing God of injustice since he knew that he was righteous and had not sinned. Yet, above all, he could say, *“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,”* (Job 13:15). Even in the depths of his confusion and wrong thoughts, he knew that ultimately El-Shaddai was to be trusted. So that, when we reach the end of his trials and see the purpose of the Lord realized, we delight to see that the result was that Job was blessed more abundantly than before, and his life was forever changed with relation to His God.

All this should reinforce in our hearts the confidence that in whatever trial or affliction we are brought into, it is the hand of our God who is in complete control and who has the desire to develop in our lives more fruitfulness that results

from a deeper spiritual character within. He is the One who can be trusted and who will not fail in any matter which is His will to accomplish in us. It may be through bringing a believer through trials and testings, but it is ultimately for the good and blessing that He desires to bestow.

May the Lord help us even more, in a world that knows nothing of the personal reality of a God who is to be depended on, to lean upon Him expectantly, knowing that with Him, all things work together for good in the lives of those who love Him.

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness,
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness”
Psalm 17:15

And shall I really see thee, glorious Lord
Who though unseen, is worshiped, loved, adored?
What joy and rapture fills my longing heart,
To think that I shall see Thee as Thou art:
Shall stand before Thee-perfect, spotless, whole
Fruit of thy suffering, travail of thy soul,
O joy of joys, O ecstasy of bliss,
What thought can measure such a thought as this?

Why Christ Came Into the World.

E. A. Salwey

THERE are several reasons assigned by the Scriptures for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the world. It is well for us to examine these reasons, seeing that before returning to His Father He commissioned His disciples with these words “*As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you*” (John 20:21), and this edict was not restricted to the eleven apostles at that time assembled, as some have falsely taught, adding also that the apostleship had been handed on to them (but see Rev. 2:2) but to the disciples, i.e., all His own then gathered to Him. So that as He was sent so we who are His followers are also sent.

1. He Came to do God’s Will

In the volume of the Book it was written of Him, i.e., in Psalm 40, to do God’s will, a body was prepared for Him according to Hebrews 10:5.

He was that Holy thing that was born of a virgin (see Luke 1:35), and He left Heaven in saying these words: “*Lo, I come to do thy will*” (see Heb. 10:9). He took away the first offerings to establish the offering by the will of God.

Man’s obligations to God were thus displaced by God’s unmerited favor to man. God makes Himself responsible to solve the situation. As no one had perfectly accomplished the will of God, Christ would come delighting thus to do. By the which will believers are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Under the Jewish economy both the offerer (man) and the offering (the beasts) had blemishes; but when Christ came He the perfect offerer gave Himself the perfect offering, once for all.

2. He Came to Reign

(see John 18:37).

Was He a KING? to this end, was He born, and for this cause came He into the world--Israel had rejected God as their King in the days of Samuel, and had asked for a King to be made from among them. God granted then their request, and through His servant, Samuel, foretold the manner of the King they would have (1 Sam. 8:10-18), and sent thunder at the time of wheat harvest.

Afterwards Israel rejected Christ as their King saying in the language of the parable of Luke 19 “*We will not have this man to reign over us*”; and although in John 12:12-19 they took branches of Palm trees crying before Him “*Blessed is the King of Israel,*” a few days later the crowds were united in saying, “*Away with Him, crucify Him.*”

When He appealed to His Father to “*Glorify Thy name,*” the people thought it thundered, but it was a voice which spoke to the rejected King, whose vicarious death will reap a mighty harvest of souls in the approaching day of His delayed Kingdom (see Isa. 49:5 and 32:1; Rev. 19:6-16).

3. He Came to Bear Witness to the Truth

(John 18:37)

He was God’s one and only True Witness, the faithful witness, the first Begotten from the dead, and Prince of the Kings of the Earth (Rev. 1:5). The only time he alluded to Himself as “a man,” was in John 8:40, when He described Himself as “*a man that hath told you the truth.*”

He who could say “*I am the truth*” was full of Grace and truth, and even the questioning scribe in Mark 12 had to admit He had said the truth (v. 32). He alone of all was the truth, said the truth and did the truth, He then could be constituted “the Faithful witness.”

4. He Came to Call Sinners to Repentance

(Matt. 9:13)

For this reason He intermingled with publicans and sinners instead of holding Himself proudly aloof or separating Himself in a “holier than thou” spirit (Isa. 65:5). Thus too are we sent into the world to announce the glad tidings; not hidden in convents or monasteries

as if afraid of contamination with the multitudes.

5. He Came to “Seek and To Save that which was Lost (Luke 19:10).

“To Save Sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

Not to raise up or improve the masses, not to educate the populace; no work of reform or reconstruction was to be His remedy for fallen sons of Adam’s race; they were lost.

Hopeless and helpless and impossible of improvement as reflected in the woman of Tekoah’s parable of the water spilt upon the ground which could not be gathered up (See 2 Sam. 14:14). Yet God devised the means whereby His banished should not be expelled from Him. Christ was the means provided, a Lamb without spot or wrinkle must be offered to redeem the asses of Adam and His posterity (Exod. 13:13). To save a person is not to help such a one; it is to do that for him or her, which they cannot do for themselves; not to help them to save themselves, but to save those who cannot help themselves. Such did Christ do. *“We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world”* (1 John 4:14).

6. For Judgment Came He into the World that They which See Not might See, and that they which see might be made blind. (See John 9:39).

“Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45); *“the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of them that believe not”* (2 Cor. 4:4).

From these statements it is patent that man has lost his powers of discernment. He may boast of his views and his opinions but all such vaunted statements are shattered by the verdict of the Almighty in Isa. 55:8, *“My thoughts are not your thoughts,”* and again *“the thoughts of His heart are only evil continually”* (Gen. 6:5). It is only, *“In Thy light shall we see Light”* (Psa. 36:9).

7. He came that we might have Life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10)

Man forfeited Life on that day when his forefather Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus dying he did die (see Gen. 2:17 : intensive form). So now it is written of all his race *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph. 2:1). There was but one way to restore life it was for that eternal life which John tells us was with the Father, and was manifested to them (1 John 1:2), that this One should taste death for every man (Heb. 2:9).

8.. Lastly, He came to Serve

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister” (Mark 10:45).

He could truly say, although all the while He was the Master *“I am among you as He that serveth”* (Luke 22:27). His concluding act in the upper room was to stoop to such humility of service as to wash His disciples’ feet (John 13:5) ; By love He served (Gal. 5:13). Thus may we do also, seeing we are called to follow His steps (1 Peter 2:21).

**Bondslave of Jesus Christ, Thine, Thine alone;
Whom have I else in Heaven, or earth, or sea?
Naught that I have, my Lord, I call mine own:
All that I am, O God, I pledge to Thee.**

**Against the doorposts of eternity,
The high and holy place of Thine abode,
Pierce through mine ear the sign of slavery
And point me any service, any road.**

**A slave! I would not question, would not choose.
Man's praise or blame no more can trouble me;
Even my right to self to Thee I lose,
And in that bondage find that I am free.—F.C.D.**

2 Kings 6, pt. 2

Alex Dryburgh

The Sons of the Prophets; A Picture of the People of God

It is important to notice the oneness, the unity, and the togetherness that marked the sons of the prophets. There are four words to underline in those verses. We and us, they and them. The Devil’s work is to displace the Christ of God in the heart, in the home, and in the assembly. He deceives the sinner: he beguiles, blinds, and binds. He defiles the man of God, diverts the servant of God, and divides the assemblies of God’s people. The work of the Devil is to get strife to mark the people of God. Unity is sweet, it is strength, and it is salvation, There the Lord commanded the blessing even life forevermore (Ps. 133:3). Sometimes in the Bible you will read about that which is good and plentiful. Think of the land of Canaan: it was a good land flowing with milk and honey.

Come right over into Canaan land
 where the grapes of Eschol grow,
 where the milk and honey flow,
 Come right over into Canaan land.

Other times in the scriptures you get that which is good and pleasing. Time and again in the epistles we get the thought of that which is good and acceptable, or if you like, pleasing to God. A sacrificed life is a separated life in Rom.12:1-2 “. . . *Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*” (spiritual worship). “*And be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed. . . that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*” Our service to Christ is acceptable to God, see Rom.14:18. “*For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.*” In Eph. 5:10, it is a Spirit-possessed life. A Spirit-filled life is acceptable to God. The gift that the Philippians gave to Paul was a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God (Phil. 4:18). Then, leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty is also good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour (1 Tim. 2:3). “*But if any widow have children or nephews (grandchildren), let them learn first to shew piety at home and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God,*” (1 Tim. 5:4). The life that is separated, Rom.12, the life that is sanctified, 1Tim.2, and the life that shares, 1Tim.5 are the lives that are good and pleasing to God. Then in 1 Pet. 2:5 we learn of the priesthood that is offering up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable. In Rom 12, it is the sacrifice of our person. In Phil. 4, it is the sacrifice of our possessions. In 1 Pet. 2, it is the sacrifice of our praise. They are all acceptable to God. Then in 1 Pet. 2:20, suffering for well doing, if we do it patiently, is well pleasing to God.

Then we have the thought of that which is good and profitable. I am thinking of godliness. You remember what Paul wrote to Timothy: “*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.*” Job agrees with him (Job 1:21): “*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*” As far as wealth and riches are concerned we leave them all behind us, or we send them on before us. Remember what the Lord said to the rich farmer in Luke 12:20: “*Whose shall those things be which thou has provided.*” There is one thing we take to heaven with us. It is not our gold, but our godliness; it is profitable in this life and in that which is to come (1 Tim. 4:8). The scriptures are good and profitable. “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (complete), thoroughly (completely) furnished unto all good works,*” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Then we have that which is good and pleasant. This unity is pleasant to God because He planned it. It is pleasant to Christ for He died for it. “*To make in himself of twain one new man so making peace*” (Eph. 2:15). It is pleasant to the Spirit, for he promotes it (Eph. 4:2). It is pleasant to angels, for they behold it. It is pleasant to believers, for they enjoy it (Ps. 133:1). We are to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment. We are to be knit together in love.

Not only did those sons of the prophets have the mind of Elisha in moving to the Jordan, but they wanted his presence to be with them. The Lord is with us in temptation. “*The Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man,*” (Gen. 39:2). The secret for the success of Joseph's life was that God was with him. In Acts. 7:9 we read, “*And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him.*” In Gen. 39:2 Joseph was in the house of temptation. Then in v. 21, Joseph was in the prison and again we read, “*but the Lord was with Joseph.*” In Isa. 43:2, we see the Lord with us in the trials of life. In Mt. 8:24-27, the Lord is with us in the Toils of life. In 2 Kings 2, it is important to notice the unity that marked a father and a son, a master and a servant. “*And they two went on.*” In 2 Kings 4, it is good to notice a unity marking a husband and a wife. “*Let us, Let us.*” When we come to this chapter 6, it is seen marking the sons of the prophets. The thought of abiding is to cleave to his person, to walk in his ways, and to do his commandments. We sometimes sing,

“Abiding, oh so wondrous sweet;
 I am resting at the Savior's feet.
 I trust in Him, I'm satisfied.
 I'm resting on the Crucified.”

It is one thing to be in Christ, but it is another thing to abide in Christ. In Christ is union; abiding in Christ is communion. It is one thing to be a member of a body--that is union. It is another to be a branch in the vine--that is communion. I could never cease to be a member of the body, but I can cease to be a branch in the vine (John 15).

“Happy if in God confiding,
 Fruitful if in Christ abiding;
 Holy through the Spirit's guiding,
 All must be well.”

The thought of “before the Lord” is seen in these verses. Everything we do should be done before the Lord. You read in the book of Samuel concerning ministry, worship, and prayer, and it is all before the Lord. Consider a man like David. He leaped and danced before the Lord (2 Sam. 6:16). David went in and sat before the Lord (2 Sam. 7:18). The psalmist (perhaps David) said, “*I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*” David sitting before the Lord was taught four lessons, and if we sit before the Lord, we will be

taught those four lessons: he got a true estimation of self, a true estimation of God, a true estimation of the people of God, and a true estimation of the word of God (2 Sam. 7:18-29). In 2 Kings 6, note these expressions: “Go ye. . . Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. . . Every man a branch.” Notice three things from 1 Cor. 12: God never intended one man to do everything. “For the body is not one member but many,” (v. 14). God never intended every man to do the same thing. “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?” (v. 29). But God did intend everyone to do something. “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge,” etc., (v. 8), and so on. We can shun our responsibility but we cannot shun the effects of shunning our responsibility. Is your place a large place? Guard it with care, for God put you there. Is your place a small place? tend it with care, for God put you there. You read about the reign of Josiah, one of the best kings of Judah, and the success of his reign was that everyone was in their proper place, everyone in their rightful place. The king stood in his place, the porters were in their place, the singers were in their place, the ark was in its place, and the Levites were in their place; and there was no Passover like it since the days of Samuel the prophet because everyone was in the right place (2 Chron. 35). A model assembly is monopolized by nobody, participated in by everybody. It is where everybody is somebody.

It is a true proverb: look for the thing where you dropped it (2 Kings 6:6). It is there.

Some translate the sons of the prophets as disciples of the prophets. It was disciples that the Lord Jesus gave the commission to in Mt. 28. Remember, the commission is threefold: Make disciples by preaching, mark them by baptism, and mold them by teaching. “Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world (age).” It is disciples that pray in Acts 1. It is disciples that break the bread in Acts 20. John in his gospel reminds us of things that are conditional. Friendship, Fruitbearing, and Discipleship. “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you”, (Jn. 15:14). We think of Abraham. Three times he was called the friend of God. Abraham was a man that had faith in God, He was a man that feared God, and a man that enjoyed fellowship with God, and those are some of the reasons he is called the friend of God. The secret of the friendship of the Lord is with them that fear him. Fruitbearing is conditional. “The branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me,” (Jn. 15:4). Joseph’s name means adding, or fruitful. Joseph was a fruitful bough, His branches went over the wall (Gen. 49:22). Discipleship is conditional. John 8:31, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” John 13:35: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” Then Jn. 15:8. “Herein is my Father glorified,

that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” John was the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The Ax Head:

A Picture of the Spirit of God

We can lose much as the people of God. The ax head was lost. The keen sharp edge was gone, it was lost. The cutting edge had gone.

There is comfort linked with the Spirit of God. “He shall give you another Comforter, that he might abide with you forever.” (Jn. 14:16). There is joy linked with the Spirit of God. The disciples were filled with the Spirit and joy. They received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit. Then we have the power of the Spirit. “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance,” (1 Thess. 1:5). We can lose our purity. I read about Nazarites that were purer than snow, whiter than milk. Their visage is blacker than coal, (Lam. 4:7-8). We can lose the sense of the Lord’s presence. Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him (Jud. 16:20). The same man lost his power, and He became like any other man (16:17). Samson lost his sight, for the Philistines bored out his eyes (16:21). He lost his liberty; they bound him with fetters (16:21). Then finally he lost his life. A young woman approached a preacher and told him that she lost all the joy she ever had, and she told him when it happened. “Well,” said the preacher, “you know when it happened and you know where it happened and you know how it happened.” She argued that she did not know, and she sat through the meetings a picture of misery. Time passed by, and the same preacher was returning for meetings the next year. The sister had been in a very heated argument with a sister who had left the country for another country. And she knew that she was to blame. She sat down and wrote a letter in which she confessed her fault, and when the letter was put into the mail box, joy returned into her soul. There is recovery and restoration with God. Failure with God is never final. Notice the principle of restoration in the Bible. In Gen. 14, we see Abraham bringing all the goods and bringing back again his brother Lot. We see it with a sister in Ruth 1 when Naomi said, “I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.” We can see it in Samson the Nazarite. “Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.” (Jud. 16:22). We read in Psa. 80:3, 7, 19, “Turn us again, oh God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.” Then Jehoshaphat went out again among the people (2 Chron. 19:4).

There are certain things we have to beware of as the people of God. We have to beware of bondage. We have been brought into liberty. Rom.6:18: “Being made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” The thought is of being made free by God. When we come to Gal. 5:1. We are

made free by Christ. “Stand fast in the liberty. . .and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,” (Jn. 8:36). Then in 2 Cor. 3:17, We are made free by the Spirit. “Now the Lord is that spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Then you have freedom linked with the truth of God. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free,” (Jn. 8:32). We have to beware of blindness. Eli the priest was blind, Samson the Nazarite was blind. Zedekiah the king was blind and the church of Laodicea was blind. There is a cause for blindness, as you consider those portions. Beware of barrenness. 2 Pet. 1:8: “If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren or unfruitful. . .” Beware of bitterness. There is nothing that hinders spiritual growth more, nor will divide an assembly sooner than a bitter spirit. Beware of bluntness; if the iron be blunt (Ecc. 10:10).

Notice certain things about the man who lost the ax head. He lost his power while he was working. Perhaps it was because he was working too energetically. What he lost was borrowed, Psa. 62:11. He was conscious of his loss, See Judges 16:20. He was deeply distressed about his loss, Job 23:3. Is it possible that this applies to one, and the power and the joy you once knew is gone?

Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul refreshing view of Jesus and his word?
What peaceful hours I once enjoyed How sweet its memory still.
But they have left an aching void, The world it cannot fill.

If that story is true of you, then you can be restored, renewed, reinstated, reequipped to the service of God.

The Stick Cut Down;

A Picture of the Death of Christ

We should always keep before us the death of Christ and also the cross of Christ The death of Christ fits me for heaven, (Gal. 2:20), “The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” The cross of Christ finishes me for earth, (Gal. 6:14), “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” Paul was a dead man as far as this world is concerned This world was a dead thing as far as Paul was concerned. As the late John Douglas from Ashgill, Scotland put it, “Paul turned this world into a cemetery and passed through it like a corpse.”

To have much, yet prize it little; to have little, yet prize it much -- this is true riches. Panin

Sanctification

Peter Simms

Reading: Jer. 1:4; 1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 12:1-2;
1 Thess.4:3,7; Eph. 5:26-27

Sanctification: (Gk. *hagiasmos*), meaning “a separation or setting apart.” Sanctify: (Heb. *qodesh*) rendered sanctify has a corresponding meaning.

The idea therefore in sanctification is the setting apart from the secular and sinful, to a sacred purpose. (Merrill F Unger, *Dictionary*.) Thus the word has a wide range of usage in the scriptures, from things to people, etc; Its first mention in the O.T. is in Gen. 2:3, where God sanctified a day, and in its first mention in the N.T., it refers to the separation of a name from all others (Matt.6:9).

In this article I will attempt to set forth this doctrine in its progressive nature. In this way an attempt will be made to make its meaning clear. Justification is a declaration by God the Justifier, that we are just (Rom. 3:26) by virtue of our being in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). This, however, does not declare us to be holy. Justification is the aspect of the work of Christ that clears us from all charge of guilt before the righteous throne of God, but does not deal with the aspect that is needed for entering the sanctuary of God. To approach a holy God, I must be holy or sanctified. Justification clears me from the penalty of sin (Rom. 5:1), while sanctification clears me from the power and defilement of sin (Rom. 6:14). I may forgive someone who has wronged me, but that in no way gives him the right to have lunch with me each day. Sanctification in its noun form is not an attainment, but rather a state (1 Cor. 1:2, Rom. 6:11) predetermined by God for believers, into which He calls them by grace (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 10:10). It is here we all begin our Christian pilgrimage.

Sanctification as set forth in the scriptures is seen from four points of view.

1. Pre-conversion sanctification:

Sanctification is a divine act preceding the individual accepting Christ as Savior (Jer. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet.1:2). This involves the sovereignty of God in election, which we will not discuss at this juncture of our study. This aspect of sanctification is through the Holy Spirit’s work that prepares the individual, through conviction of sin and increasing concern of his need, to receive the gospel message. In 2 Thess. 2:13, it is linked with the belief of the truth and has salvation in view; in 1 Pet. 1:2, it is unto the obedience to the message and the resultant application of the value (sprinkling) of the sacrificial work of Christ for the individual sinner.

2. Positional sanctification:

We are set apart from the power of sin unto God in Christ (Rom. 6:6,10-11) the moment we got saved. At that very instant we were sanctified by the blood of Christ (Heb.10:10), and perfected forever with the same offering (Heb.10:14). The apostle said that the believers in Corinth were sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor.1:2). Christ's relation to sin is now ours (Rom.6:10-11) *"in that He died He died unto sin once, in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God IN Jesus Christ our Lord"*. Sanctification in its noun form is not something we obtain by some effort of our own. It is rather a state (1 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 6:11) predetermined by God for believers (1 Pet.1:2), into which He calls them by grace (Eph.1:3-4). Everything here hinges on being in Christ, a truth which all believers should grasp and make their own.

- a) Rom.6:6-8; Col.2:20 Dead with Christ.
- b) Rom.6:2 Buried with Christ.
- c) Eph.2:5 Quickened us together with Christ.
- d) Eph.2:6; Raised us up together with Christ.
- e) Eph.2:6 Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

All this is ours, simply on the ground that God has accepted, or graced, us in the beloved (Eph. 1:6). In Christ we are as separated from sin or as dead to it as He is (Rom. 6:10-11). This truth must be grasped before the following can be appreciated, for no one can live holy if they're unholy. It's in this unholy state that God found us, and set us apart (sanctified us) for Himself in Christ. It is this state of being sanctified that enables the believer to have access into the sanctuary of an awesomely holy God. (Cp Heb. 10:19-22)

3. Progressive & Practical Sanctification:

Progressive sanctification is not instantaneous, but rather a steady growth in grace (1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18) and is a result of discipline (Heb.12:10), obedience to the Word of God, (Rom.12:1-4), and following the example of Christ in the power of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18). The apostle Paul gives an ideal example of what progressive and practical sanctification is, and what it involves in Phil. 3:9-14: *"that I may be found in him, not having my righteousness, which would be on the principle of law, but that which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith, to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the dead. Not that I have already obtained the prize, or am already perfected; but I pursue, if also I may get possession of it, seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count to have got possession myself; but one thing—forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking*

towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus." (J N Darby). Sanctification is built up little by little in the power of the Holy Spirit, (Rom. 8:13; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 3:16.) the agent in sanctification, (Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11.) Practical sanctification (1 Thess. 4:3,7) and holiness of life are essential if we would see God, says Heb. 12:11. It's the course of a life, expected of and befitting those separated unto God, (Rom. 6:19, 22; 1Thess. 4:7; 1 Tim. 2:15.

4. Prospective & Ultimate Sanctification:

One day our sanctification which we all strive and long for today will be perfect and complete, lacking no moral deficiencies, but we'll be just like our glorious Lord (1 Jn. 3:2; Phil. 3:20-21). What a day that will be, when we all shall be like Him for we shall see him as He is! Our Lord's day of patience will also then be over (2 Thess. 3:5), when He shall present to Himself His spotless bride for whom He died. *"That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish"* (Eph.5:25-27 R.S.V), *"being holy and without blame before him in love"* (Eph.1:4). *We say with John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus."* (Rev. 22:20).

**Only five barley loaves!
Only two fishes small!
And shall I offer these poor gifts
To Christ, the Lord of all?**

**To Him whose mighty word
Can still the angry sea,
Can cleanse the lepers, raise the dead?
He hath no need of me.**

**Yes, He hath need of thee;
Then bring thy loaves of bread;
Behold with them, when Jesus speaks,
The multitudes are fed.**

**And when thine eyes shall see
The holy ransomed throng,
In heavenly fields, by living streams,
By Jesus led along,**

**Unspeakable thy joy shall be,
And glorious thy reward,
If, by thy barley loaves, one soul
Has been brought home to God.**

Grace, Gentleness, Goodness

John Rankin

"Thy gentleness hath made me great," Ps. 18:35.

The word gentleness in the Scriptures has different shades of meaning, such as humility, mildness, meekness, moderation, patience, kindness, and goodness. With joy we note how God wrought in David, and how He may work in us that which is good and well pleasing in His sight. This grace excludes pride, harshness, self-vindication, stubbornness, irritability, selfishness, and all that savors of the flesh.

The natural man desires to be great in the estimation of men, but oftentimes he is careless as to how he reaches the goal. With a strong mind, a dominant will, and a clever tongue he will drive ahead leaving in his train wounds, sorrows, tears, and death. What does it matter to him what persons, or principles of justice he tramples down, if only he can get up?

To be great in the estimation of heaven we must reach it by the avenue of gentleness. Greatness not reached in this way is a mere bubble, attractive for a moment to vanish forever. We would emphasize three words as contained in the meaning of gentleness.

1. Humbleness is first.

It has been said that there are four kinds of pride. "National pride, or pride of race: Social pride, or pride of place: Personal pride, or pride of face: and Spiritual pride, or pride of grace." All pride is of Satanic origin. There was no pride about us at the time we were saved, but there may be much of it attached to us now. Being proud of our own supposed humility may cause us to speak sneeringly of others whom we call proud. We need to remember the divine injunction—with its qualification —"*Judge not that ye be not judged.*"

In Ps. 45:4, the word meekness is the same as gentleness in Psalm 18:35, and it is there applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. When the ambitious and disputing disciples asked who should be the greater He told them that the truly great were the servants of all, and he added, "*Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" We owe our eternal salvation to this blessed One who acted upon the principle of self-abnegation. How is it we are so unlike him? "*He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him.*" (Phil. 2:8). The antichrist, who will exalt himself, will be brought down to the lowest depths of misery forever. Is it the spirit of Christ or the spirit of antichrist which characterizes us?

When David sat before the Lord he said, "*Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought rue hitherto?*" (2 Sam. 7:18, 29)—the language of a devout, humble and grateful man. Throughout the Psalms which bear his name the same humbleness of mind is clearly evident. Solomon his son said:— "*Before honor is humility*" (Prov. 15:33) "*By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honor and life,*" (Prov. 22:4) This is how to be truly great, divinely great, permanently great. If we are really humble we shall not be occupied with ourselves but with God the source of all good. Apart from His abounding grace we are proud, rebellious sinners, fit only for the everlasting burnings. "*By the grace of God,*" said Paul, "*I am what I am.*"

"Humility, the sweetest, loveliest flower that bloomed in Eden and the first that died; has rarely blossomed since on human soil. It is so frail, so delicate a thing, 'tis gone if it but look upon itself; and he who ventures to esteem it his, proves by that single thought he has it not." (C. F.)

"*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*" "*Be clothed with humility.*"

2. Yieldingness follows

In Phil. 4:5 we have a needful exhortation "*Let your moderation (considerateness, or gentleness, or yieldingness) be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*" When the apostle Paul sought to bring the Corinthian saints into line with God's purpose he besought them "*by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" True fidelity to Christ and the truth will never be divorced from the reproduction of His character. How the remembrance of what He is should rebuke us for our "*debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and tumults,*" (2 Cor. 12:20)

We do well to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but our contention is perhaps more frequently that which is begotten of pride, for "*Only by pride cometh contention.*" If our divisions are because of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are justified, but if they are because of ourselves they exist to our shame. How careless we have been with our tongues, our tempers, and our pens! We seem naturally to find such undefinable pleasure in revenge. It would seem that breaches amongst the Lord's people have been caused, unnecessarily in many cases, which time will never heal. When Shimei cursed David and Abishai sought permission from his master to take off the accuser's head, David said, "*Let him alone and let him curse. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.*" (2 Sam. 11:12). He saw God behind Shimei's behavior and he meekly and with confidence left his case in His hands. What opportunities he had also of wreaking ven-

geance on Saul, but he refrained. Meekness is by no means weakness; it is power kept under control. It takes a strong man to be unrevenged and to yield in matters which are not of vital and fundamental importance. Abraham yielded to his nephew Lot to avoid, in the face of the world, the dishonor of strife. To be patient or gentle is one of the qualifications of a true overseer. (1 Tim. 3:3). Again in Titus there is a word to all the family of faith *"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawler, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."*

3. Usefulness Results

The fruit of the spirit is gentleness. That is a gracious and kindly disposition showing itself in acts of beneficence. It thus conveys the thought of being useful in this world of need. Naturally *"There is none that doeth good."* How humbling to remember this, and yet how thankful we are that by God's grace it is our privilege to do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Men despise the riches of God's goodness which is designed to lead them to repentance. The goodness of God is expressed in its highest degree in the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this way did His kindness and love toward man appear. (Titus 3:4).

In His saints, through the coming ages, God is going to *"shew the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."* "Kindness," or "goodness," or "gentleness" is one of those things we are to put on, (Col. 3:12), and it is mentioned among the many things in which Paul and others approved themselves as the ministers of God. (2 Cor. 6:6). As God has acted toward us, so He expects us to act toward others. In David it is beautifully illustrated. Having become the subject of God's kindness he is found asking in 2 Samuel 9:1, *"Is there yet any left of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God unto him for Jonathan's sake?"* God's grace operating in our hearts will ever lead us to be active in seeking the blessing of others. What claim have we to relationship with God if there is not manifested in us some resemblance to His character.

This is what our Lord meant when He said *"Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect,"* (Matt. 5:48). It is no thanks to us if we love those that love us. What reward can we expect for doing what can be easily done by the unconverted. As God is impartial in making His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust; so our acts of goodness should not be limited to those who love us. We are to *"love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,"* Matt. 5:46. And again, *"If thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome*

evil with good," (Rom. 12:21).

Possessing the quality of gentleness, David was able to exclaim with a grateful heart, *"Thy gentleness hath made me great."* May we covet only the true greatness that cometh from God above.

How can one walk in communion with Christ in heaven and not come in collision with the world? Do I walk as one who is in present, living intercourse with the heart of Christ, having my heart formed and fashioned by the constant apprehension of His glory? And if so, how can I be conformed to the world? Do you believe that Christ is not ashamed to confess your name to the Father, as one whom He has apprehended for glory? Oh, is there no divine fullness, nothing unsearchable, connected with the love that says, "How are you walking? Is it as one who is reaching forth and pressing on for the mark?" If I am called to give up certain things, to be separate from certain things, is it sorrow to me or joy, under the eye of Christ who is leading me on into glory with Himself?

Coleridge, the poet, in a letter written a fortnight before his death, addressed to his child, says: "On the eve of my departure I declare to you that health is a great blessing; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest blessing, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian."