

To "... strengthen the things which remain..." Revelation 3:2

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"The Lord... Has Set My Feet"

"...I trust in the Lord. I will be glad and rejoice in Thy mercy: for Thou hast considered my trouble; Thou hast known my soul in adversities; and hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: Thou hast **set my feet** in a large room." Psalm 31: 6-8

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and **set my feet** upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust . . ." Psalm 40: 1-4

Both of these lovely Psalms of David speak of the Savior and are quoted by the New Testament writers concerning Him. We appreciate that, when we consider the Lord of Glory stepping into the enemy's land and enduring all the enmity of depraved mankind as He wended His way to Calvary and fulfilled the purposes of God, even sinking beneath the fury of God's wrath that He might lift us up in salvation.

Yet David wrote these psalms as he personally experienced the animosity of his enemies, and as troubles beset him. Let these words, yes, even these complete Psalms, be an encouragement to each saint that is experiencing such difficulties. In the midst of troubles and danger, of doubts and fears, of "lying vanities," and of "those that seek after my soul to destroy it," there is a higher plane. There is a heavenly tableland, where He will set your feet. It is a large room, one that is furnished and lit by His glorious presence, and one in which the snaring noose of the enemy cannot uncoil. It is a place where goings are established and where songs of praise to Him dispel the "slander of many." It is a place where the secret of His presence hides from the pride of men, and where His loving kindness and truth preserves. Finally, it is a place where those who seek Him are glad in Him, and those who

love His salvation magnify Him continually. David knew the comfort and consolation of this in his day, and we can each know it too.

Higher Ground

I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

My heart has no desire to stay,
Where doubts arise and fears dismay;
Though some may dwell where those abound,
My prayer, my aim, is higher ground.

I want to live above the world,
Though Satan's darts at me are hurled;
For faith has caught the joyful sound,
The song of saints on higher ground.

I want to scale the utmost height
And catch a gleam of glory bright;
But still I'll pray 'til Heav'n I've found,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven's table land,
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

Johnson Oatman, Jr.
1856-1922

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Stewardship.

Albert Long

3. Stewardship in the Unrighteous Mammon

"If therefore ye have not been faithful (stewards) in the unrighteous mammon (or riches) who will commit to your trust the true riches"? (Luke 16:11). The parable of the unjust steward was designedly given by the Lord to impress upon the disciples, in a covetous age (v.14-15), the necessity of a right attitude toward money if they were to serve God acceptably, for the love of money and the love of God were utterly incompatible (v.13). Hence the unrighteous mammon was to be regarded as their servant, although not used unrighteously, to establish them in the affections of others, so that, when it failed, they might be received *"into the eternal tabernacles"* (v.19 R.V.). In what sense we are to understand a reception into the eternal tabernacles by reason of a prudent use of money, is perhaps explained by reference to the account of the rich man and Lazarus which follows, for here was one who, knowing the sad condition of Lazarus (v.25) had yet done nothing, in spite of his own affluence, to relieve the misery of one less fortunate, and so secure his friendship, but had rather pandered to his own desire for pleasure and luxury to the neglect of mercy. The time came, however, when his riches "failed" in death (how else might that, spoken of as a certainty i.e., "when it shall fail,"—occur?), and all his entreaty for alleviation of his own suffering by Lazarus could not avail, nor could he be received into those "eternal dwellings" because of an impassable chasm, which prevented any practical intercourse between the two sides (v.26). For his life of self-indulgence to the forsaking of mercy was but evidence of his domination by riches to the hatred of God, and of his unfitness to be received into the eternal tabernacles, because had he loved God, he could not have withheld from the succor of his fellow (see 1 John 3. 17). As revealed to the disciples, the "true riches" (Luke 16:11) or "treasure in heaven" (chap. 12:33 and 18:22) was the kingdom of God (chap. 12:31-32), and to the end that they might, at all costs, attain thereunto, was the parable of the rich fool given, for here was yet another man obsessed by worldly gain to the exclusion of God, summoned to the bar of judgment unexpectedly and unprepared, with no prospect of "treasure in heaven," for said the Lord Jesus, *"so is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God"* (v.21). Had his "treasure" been in heaven, his heart would have been there also, and his life would have borne witness thereto (v.34). As it was his unfaithfulness in "that which is least" was evidence of his incompetence to be entrusted with "that which is much" (chap. 16:10).

In counseling Timothy, Paul gives warning of the sor-

rows which attend the "love of money" (1 Tim. 6:9, 10), for that which, used as a stewardship from God, can be the occasion of much joy and blessing to men and glory to the Lord, can also, if it become an end in itself, prove to be our spiritual undoing and loss, *"for the love of money is a root of every evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (v.10, R.V.). And again, he exhorts that those *"that are rich in this world ... be not high-minded, nor hope in uncertain riches, but in the living God"* (v.17). For their affluence was to be regarded as a trust from the Lord, to be exercised in benefactions against *"the time to come."* (vv.18, 19).

Then how affecting it is to read of the liberality of the Macedonian assemblies, which, stirred up by the readiness of those of Achaia to minister to the wants of needy saints, had themselves, albeit out of "deep poverty," given so generously to relieve need (2 Cor. 8:1, 2). For although it could only have been expected of them to give *"according as a man hath"* (v. 12), they gave *"beyond their power"* (v. 3), inasmuch as in giving came increased ability to give, since the promise was true that *"he that supplieth seed to the sower . . . shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing"* (chap. 9:10, R.V.). And to what effect otherwise? Achaia was provoked to translate their "readiness" into "doing" (chap. 8:11), surely an *"increase in the fruits of righteousness"* (chap. 9:10), and thanksgivings abounded to the glory of God for the completion of the "grace" of giving in those of Achaia, which was previously only begun in them (chap. 8:6; 9:12, 13).

So it is our privilege, according *"as God hath prospered"* (1 Cor. 16:2)—and He is *"able to make all grace abound"* (2 Cor. 9:8)—to *"distribute unto the necessities of the saints"* (Rom. 12:13) and to *"do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10), remembering that *"in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (v. 9), and *"that he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully"* (2 Cor. 9:6). For One, although rich beyond human thought, "became poor," that out of his deep "poverty," dire distress, which mere mammon could not relieve, might be met and turned to abundance, and has left us *"an example, that we should follow his steps"* (2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Few perish from the lack of money; many perish from the love of money.

Panin

Isaiah's Song, Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Robert Surgenor

The pattern used by the Holy Spirit in composing the Holy Scriptures over a period of more than 3,500 years is most interesting. He divided the Old Testament into three distinct sections:

1. The first 17 books, Genesis to Esther, are historical
2. The next 5 books Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon, are poetical.
3. The last 17 books starting at Isaiah on to Malachi are prophetic.

Thus we see a division of 17-5-17. However, even though the five middle books of the Old Testament are written in Hebrew poetry, yet we do find poems elsewhere in the Old Testament, such as Isaiah's immortal poem in his prophecy chapter 52:13-53:12.

To an English-speaking mind, the portion certainly would not resemble poetry. However, Hebrew poetry is far different than English poetry, where certain lines rhyme with each other. Hebrew poetry is not written after that manner, but rather written with the use of "thought rhyme," rather than the use of "word rhyme." This method involves arranging thoughts in relation to each other whether those words rhyme or not. This involves what is called,

Synonymous parallelism. This is done by repeating the thought of the first line in the second line. An example of this is found in Psalm 24:2. First line – *"For He hath founded it upon the seas."* Second line – *"And established it upon the floods."*

There is also **Antithetic parallelism.** This is seen in Psalm 1:6, where the truth presented in one line is strengthened by a contrasting statement in the other. Notice. *"For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous"* (first line). *"But the way of the ungodly shall perish"* (second line).

The Hebrews also employed **synthetic parallelism** in their poetry. This is seen in Ps 119:11. The cause – *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart,"* The effect – *"That I might not sin against Thee."*

Another method was the use of **Progressive, Stairlike, Climatic, and Introverted parallelisms.** By this, one can readily see that the portion we are about to consider in Isaiah's prophecy hardly seems to be poetic to the English mind. However, it is! And it is one of the most beautiful and sublime poems found in the Old Testament. I have often likened the prophecy of Zechariah in the Old Testament to the Revelation of John in the New Testament, but I search in vain to find a single portion so pregnant with truth concerning God's most unique Servant, the Lord

Jesus Christ as in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12.

The three main divisions of Isaiah's prophecy are beautiful to behold. Chapters 1 to 35 our Lord is portrayed as the Sovereign. In that section we have a statement that describes the first section of the prophecy, namely, *"A King shall reign in righteousness"* (32:1). Coming to chapter 36 on to chapter 39 we find God's Son as the Savior. Hezekiah exclaims, *"The Lord was ready to save me"* (38:20). The third section commences at chapter 40 and continues to the end of the prophecy. In that wondrous section we find the Lord as the Servant. God bears witness to this fact, proclaiming, *"Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles"* (42:1).

In the Servant section of Isaiah's prophecy we have four poems, or songs. The four Servant Songs are:

- (1) 42:1-4. The One in whom God delighted and upheld.
- (2) 49:1-6. The One whom God would use to bring salvation unto the ends of the earth.
- (3) 50:4-9. The One who was obedient unto death, and was helped of God.
- (4) 52:13 - 53:12. The One who dealt prudently, was slain and raised again.

God's appraisal of His Servant in the song we will consider is seven-fold.

- (1) My Servant (52:13).
- (2) The Arm of the Lord (53:1).
- (3) A Tender Plant (53:2).
- (4) A Root out of a dry ground (53:2).
- (5) A Man of Sorrows (53:3).
- (6) A Lamb (53:7).
- (7) My Righteous Servant (53:11).

The song contains no less than 49 personal pronouns referring to the Servant, and at least 8 verses are quoted in the New Testament.

There are some commentators who refuse to believe that Isaiah's songs are Messianic but that rather they refer to Israel's exile and restoration in the sixth century BC. They erroneously believe that Isaiah 53 does not refer to some future person as Jesus, but is a story about a servant who lived in the past, and that it is referring to the past sufferings of Israel in exile in Babylon.

Jewish interpreters once believed Isaiah's songs referred to the coming Messiah, but in recent years, the general trend among Jewish scholars is to flatly reject the thought that these songs are Messianic. I have heard that some Jewish Bibles do not contain Isaiah 53, but as far as I know, this

report is erroneous. However, even though they may have Isaiah 53 in their Bible, the Jewish mind is blinded.

In the original Holy Scriptures, there were no divisions of chapters and verses. These were inserted at a much later date, and are helpful in finding the precise location of a particular verse being referred to. However, the insertion of chapters and verses also produces a negative thought, that just because a chapter ends, the thought of that chapter also ends. This is not necessarily true, as we have in the case of Isaiah's poem, for chapter 52 should have terminated at verse 12, and chapter 53 should have commenced at chapter 52:13. This section, 52:13 to 53:12 contains Isaiah's song (or poem), and is divided into five stanzas, each composed of three verses. In our language, there are 75 words in stanza one (52:13-15); 89 words in stanza two (53:1-3); 77 words in stanza three (53:4-6); 100 words in stanza four (53:7-9); and 121 words in stanza five (53:10-12). This makes a total of 462 words in the English language. Most interesting is the fact that these five stanzas correspond to the five books of Moses.

(1) 52:13-15 corresponds to Genesis where we find the PREEMINENCE OF THE SERVANT. Joseph dealt prudently in Egypt and was finally exalted to a place of preeminence. This is noticed of Christ in this stanza.

(2) 53:1-3 corresponds to Exodus where the PATHWAY OF THE SERVANT is observed. Moses was raised up of God and rejected by his brethren. The Lord came unto His own and they received Him not.

(3) 53:4-6 relates to Leviticus where the PASSION OF THE SERVANT is noticed. There we observe the Great Day of Atonement, and the laying of the priest's hands on the goat for a sin offering. So, the Lord Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.

(4) 53:7-9 points to Numbers where we find PROPHECY CONCERNING THE SERVANT. In this book we find the lamb mentioned 73 times. Out of those times 38 are in chapters 28 and 29, pointing to the Lamb of God who was brought as a lamb to the slaughter.

(5) 53:10-12 dovetails with Deuteronomy where the PORTION OF THE SERVANT is seen. Moses made intercession for the transgressors and spoke of the portion of His people to be possessed in Canaan, so also our Lord is seen dividing the spoil with the strong, and making intercession for the transgressors.

The last four stanzas can also be identified with the badgers' skins, the rams' skins, the goats' hair, and the fine twined linen of the Tabernacle, in that same order. The badgers' skins portray the Servant as Scorned and Sorrowful; the rams' skins as Suffering and Silent; the goat's hair as Slain; and the fine twined linen as the

Satisfied and Supreme Servant.

One can also turn to the gospel of John and find the same identification between this portion and John's testimony.

At your leisure you can compare John 19:15, 16, 18, 20:17 linking those verses in the same order with the last four stanzas of Isaiah 53. It is heart-warming to gaze upon and consider.

Stanza One (52:13-15).

The Preeminence of the Servant

Genesis contains the seed of all that follows in the Bible. The first three verses of this song correspond to the Book of Genesis in that they contain the seed of all that follows in the song.

"Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

The song commences with a very commanding note--"Behold"! In other words, Stop! Look! and Listen! God has something very important to say, and He wants us ready to pay special attention to His proclamation. Immediately He directs us to His Servant and His wisdom. *"He shall deal prudently,"* thus we see the prosperity and success of His enterprise. Having said that, God moves quickly on to His Servant's resurrection and ascension. *"He shall be exalted."* The word means "to rise up in exaltation." This was observed by godly women early Lord's day morning at the sepulcher. However, God does not stop there but takes us from the sepulcher to the mount called Olivet. *"He shall be extolled."* That word means "lifted up" and refers to His ascension. It was at that mount that their eyes witnessed something never seen before. After speaking appropriate words to them they saw Him slowly begin to rise! The law of gravity had no effect! They stood there spellbound, gazing up as a cloud received Him out of their sight. I'm sure they never forgot that sight. He didn't simply evaporate or suddenly vanish. Oh no, God would never allow something that would cause them to think He was only a spirit. Not at all! They saw a real Man disappear in a cloud.

Now it is interesting how the Spirit writes about His leaving His own, to return to the Father's home in heaven. In Matthew's Gospel there is no report. One would almost think that the King was going to immediately set up His earthly kingdom. Mark portrays the Lord as God's Servant, and regarding His ascension Mark records that He was "received up." This word "received" implies that the Servant was accepted. Luke reports that the perfect Man was "carried up" as if to say that He was honored in being "carried up." In John, Christ is portrayed as the Son of God, and there He says, "I ascend," implying that by His own

power as the Son, He ascended into heaven. In the Acts He is spoken of as being “taken up,” as if to imply that His work down here was done.

The next expression is, My Servant shall “*be very high.*” Thus we have His position at the right hand of God, the place of power and authority. God hath highly exalted Him (Phil. 2:9).

“*As many were astonished at Thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.*” The song now brings us from the glory back to earth to view the life of God’s Servant, and the effect it had upon men. “*As many were astonished at Thee.*” “Astonied” comes from a root word “to stun.” As He moved about, men were stunned at Him. The question arises, what were they stunned about? Why were they shocked and struck dumb? What ever produced such a reaction? If it wasn’t His miracles, His gracious words, then what was it? The reason they were so stunned and shocked was from the fact that He claimed to be the Son of God, but they were looking for a far different Messiah than He portrayed. “*His visage and form were marred (disfigured) more than any man.*” Some have thought that from excessive grief, and the many burdens connected with His ministry, that His general appearance no longer retained the appearance of a man. He was weighted down with grief and sorrow. He hardly had the appearance of a mighty conqueror, one who would free the nation from Roman rule and set up a glorious kingdom for Israel. They would look at Him, a poor Carpenter from a despised city called Nazareth. Seeing His poor attire, His meager following, His outrageous claims, only disgusted them and turned them away. His visage does not simply mean His face, it means the whole person as viewed by the eyes of men. I am sure that with the extreme sufferings of the Cross, it could also be said of Him that “*His visage was so marred more than any man.*”

“*So shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.*” The stanza now closes with a tremendous prophecy. “*So shall He sprinkle many nations.*” One must remember that in the Hebrew language there can be various words come from the same root of the word to be translated. The context determined on what word the translator would use. The King James translators decided to use the word “sprinkle,” instead of “startle.” Perhaps because they were looking at the Messiah returning as a priest, thus sprinkling the nations with His atoning blood, as the high priest did on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. However, the remainder of the verse would forbid such an interpretation, and the word “startle” would be far more appropriate in this case. “He will startle many nations.” That word comes from

an illusion of a person silently coming up behind a person, then suddenly spraying them with water. What a shock that would be! That is the thought. When He returns in mighty power with His angels, to set up His kingdom, He will totally shock all the nations! “*The kings shall shut their mouths at Him.*” In other words, they won’t have a word to say! What an awakening awaits the nations in that soon-coming day! “*For that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.*” This statement is used by Paul in Romans 15:21 regarding his taking the gospel to the Gentiles, but the fulfillment of this statement will not be until the King returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

When Christ returns and speaks, kings and nations will have their eyes opened as to who is speaking. They will recognize Him as the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. Kings will acknowledge His wisdom and bow to His lordship. What a tremendous event that will be for our now-rejected Lord.

It may be said that this first stanza is basically a prologue to the remaining four stanzas of the song. It is all of chapter 53 in compact form.

(to be continued)

At any rate, cost what it may, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God is not alone our liberty but our duty.

anon

What is His Name? Jehovah

Joel Portman

With regard to the names of God, L.S. Chafer (*Systematic Theology, Vol. 1*), writes, “The primary Old Testament titles do not present an individualized revelation of three Persons, but rather three characterizing realities within the Godhead. In addition to various other meanings, the name “Jehovah” exhibits the innermost depth of the divine Being, the name “Elohim,” being plural in its form, intimates the fact of three Persons, and the name “Adonai” proclaims divine authority.” Again he says that “Jehovah—printed in the A. V. by LORD and GOD with all letters capitalized—is divinely reserved for its ineffable service as the unpolled and unshared name of Deity. Elohim and Adonai are less distinctive since these titles are sometimes ascribed to creatures” (and false gods). This serves as an appropriate

opening to the study of this name of God, which is Jehovah, considered in its relationship to other names that we have already studied in previous articles.

The name Jehovah is only used for the true God in the Old Testament. He only is identified by this name, and some have said that this is God's proper, personal name. Girdleston (*Old Testament Synonyms*) says, "It is generally agreed that Jehovah is not a generic or class name, but a personal, or proper name." We read, "*I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*" (Isa. 42:8). We find it some 6,000 times, perhaps more, in our Bibles, and it is always used as the personal name with reference to God. "The Hebrew may say the Elohim, the true God, in opposition to all false gods; but he never says the Jehovah, for Jehovah is the name of the true God only," (Girdlestone, *Old Testament Synonyms*). Moses on Mt. Sinai desired to see God, and we read that the LORD responded by telling him, "*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee . . .*" (Ex. 33:19). Ex.34:6 declares that "*the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth. . .*" In these expressions we find some indication of the depths of meaning that are conveyed by the name Jehovah.

Derivation and Meaning of Jehovah

Most scholars are agreed that this name is derived from a Hebrew word "havah," that means "to be," or "being." "This word is almost exactly like the Hebrew verb, "chavah," "to live," or "life." (Nathan Stone, *Names of God*). So that we learn that the name indicates the character of God as One who has life in Himself, life which is not derived or having a beginning, but eternally self-existent and always having possessed eternal life, existing without beginning or end. That is the meaning conveyed to Moses in Ex. 3:13-14, when Moses asks how he should respond to the Israelites when they ask for the name of the One who sent him. "*And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*" Those "I AM" expressions continue through the Old Testament and into the New where, as we know, the Lord affirmed that identity for Himself many times in John's gospel. We see it in Isa. 43:10, 11 and other references. Girdlestone, (*Old Testament Synonyms*), says that these references denote a "Personal, Continuous, Absolute, Self-determining Existence." It also implies that God is always true to His own character. What He is, He is, and every revelation of Himself only imparts greater truth of His own holy being to mankind. "Jehovah therefore is One, who "being what He is," "loves righteousness and hates iniquity," and finds in

all evil, if it exists, something antagonistic to His nature, which, because it is not true, must be opposed and judged," (Andrew Jukes, *The Names of God*).

Jehovah's Revelation to Israel

Some writers assert that the name also means "I will be what I will be," and while this means much the same as what we have said, it thus includes the thought of a progressive revelation of God to His people and eternal sameness. Chafer (*Systematic Theology, Vol. 1*) quotes from G. F. Oehler, when he says, "But as it is not the idea of a continuous existence which lies in the verb havah or hayah, but that of existence in motion, of becoming and occurring . . . so also the form of the name as derived from the imperfect leads us to understand in it the existence of God, not as an existence at rest, but as one always becoming, always making itself known in a process of becoming. . . God is rather Jehovah in as far as he has entered into an historical relation to mankind, and in particular to the chosen people Israel, and shows Himself continually in this historical relation as he who is, and who is what he is." This is not to say that God progresses in any way, for He is absolutely perfect in all His ways and person. It means that this is a name that God uses especially when He is making a special revelation of Himself to men. He is the God of revelation, and in His self-revealing, He progressively makes more known to those who know Him. So His purpose in revealing Himself to the patriarchs and to Israel was to reveal more and more of His personal attributes having to do with His holy character and love for them. The only limitation, as always, lay in their unbelief and inability to take in and appreciate those truths, though Jehovah employed every effort to do so. The giving of the law by Moses and the scenes at Sinai, with its clouds and darkness, was designed for that purpose, so that His people might realize the reverence that is due to His person and name, and realize the holiness of His person and His demands on those who would be identified with Him.

In contrast to the nations of the world that had their differing "Elohim," to His people, Israel, He was and is "Jehovah." This name for God was, interestingly, also used by men like Balaam, who was a false prophet, yet who knew something about Jehovah and received communications from Him with regard to Israel. Pharaoh, Ex. 5:2, spoke correctly when he said, "*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*" To him, Jehovah was only another "god" among many, and he didn't recognize or acknowledge the LORD. As a result, he refused to obey to let Israel go free. Moses and Aaron properly responded to him by saying, "*The God of the Hebrews hath met us. . .*" thus identifying Jehovah as the unique God of the nation of Israel, those who were identified with their forefather Abraham, the Hebrew.

Many wonder why the LORD says to Moses in Ex. 6:2-4, that He was not known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by that name, though He had appeared to them. We find the name Jehovah used many times when God speaks to those patriarchs, and it was a name used many times by them. Why does it say that He was not known to them by that name? A number of explanations have been given, but the best and most accepted is that while the LORD appeared to those men by that name, they didn't know its significance as it was now being made known to Moses and Israel, showing Him to be the God who was unique to them and who was consistently true to His character. Andrew Jukes has said that Adam and Eve knew the significance of the name, for while the patriarchs had not known Him in the character that this name declares, they had known His judgment, and Noah also, since he had seen and experienced the flood. These acts displayed God's holy and righteous response to man's sin but also had manifested His grace and love to mankind.

Moral and Spiritual Attributes

This is clear in the first chapters of our Bible, in that when recording the facts of creation, it is Elohim who acts (Gen. 1:1-2:3), but when God begins to detail His relationship with the created man, we begin to see the name Jehovah-Elohim used (2:4, etc). So this name is related to God's personal relationship with individuals as He makes Himself known as a righteous, holy, just and loving God who must judge sin (as seen in Gen. 3), but who grieves and is saddened over those who have thus sinned (Judges 10:6,7, 16; Jer. 31:3; Isa. 63:9; Hos. 11:8). It is a name that is linked especially with His moral attributes, showing that He is a God who is absolutely holy and hates sin in every form, but who also grieves over the sinner and erring ones. In Gen. 6:5, we read that "*God (Elohim) saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . .*" but in v. 6, we read that "*it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*" In v. 8, we learn that "*Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*" but in v. 9, it is recorded that "*Noah walked with God (Elohim).*" Many similar changes of name in a passage can be noted for our benefit, and there is always a reason for the use or change of any of God's names. "It is as Jehovah that God places man under moral obligations with a warning of punishment for disobedience. Thou shalt and thou shalt not. How significant in the light of this that when Satan tempts Eve to disobedience he does not mention the name Jehovah, but only Elohim, nor does Eve mention it in her reply to him. Is it because the name Jehovah is not known to them, or rather because deliberate purpose on Satan's part to deceive and an incipient sense of guilt within Eve suppress that name? Can one do evil and mention that name at the same time? And how significant, too, that after their sin they hide, and then hear the voice of Jehovah-God in the garden,

saying, "Where art thou?" demanding an account of their actions." (Nathan Stone, *Names of God*).

Christ as Jehovah

Evidence that Jesus Christ is Jehovah can be seen in the fact that He displayed all the attributes of Jehovah. Is Jehovah holy? Christ is "*that holy thing that shall be born . . .*" (Lk. 1:35), and He was known by demons as "*the Holy One of God,*" (Lk. 4:34) and in other references (Acts 2:27, 3:14, 13:35). He proved that He was pure, holy and undefiled, being without the taint or tendency of sin. He demonstrated the essence of divine holiness in an unholy and defiled environment and was uncompromising in His judgment of sin. But even in that rigid opposition to sin, He displayed the grace of God and compassion to the sinful and wayward. He wept over Jerusalem, (Lk. 19:41), though it was the city where men were plotting His death, and in Lk. 13:34, we find Him manifesting the kindness of His heart toward those who had continually rejected God's messengers and refused God's Word.

Additionally, His character as Jehovah can be proved from the repeated statements He made to that effect. The Jews clearly understood what He was saying, when He declared, "*Before Abraham was (came into being), I am (not was),*" (Jn. 8:58). Many other assertions of His identity are not clearly seen in our Authorized Version of the Bible, but they also declare the same, such as a literal reading of Jn. 4:24-26, "*It is I AM that speaketh unto thee,*" in Jn. 6:20, "*It is I AM; be not afraid,*" in Jn. 8:24, "*For if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins,*" and many others. In addition, John's gospel records the great declarations of Christ, when He repeatedly used the expression, "I AM" linked with what He was as the Bread of life, etc.

Other passages from the Old Testament that refer to Jehovah are quoted in the New and applied to the Lord Jesus. These include Isa. 40:3 with Mt. 3:1-3, Isa. 45:21-23 with Phil. 2:9-11, Joel 2:32 with Rom. 10:13, and many others. So that those who deny that our Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah (as do many cults), grievously err, possibly deliberately so.

Implications of Jehovah

Since the LORD is unchanging in His character and person, believers need to recognize that neither have His standards for mankind changed. Is He a holy, righteous LORD, who loves righteousness and demands holiness in His people? He remains the same, and His demands on saints today are still the same (Josh. 24:19, Ex. 22:31, Lev. 11:44, 19:2, 20:26, 1 Pet. 1:15-16). Did He judge sin and transgression in the Old Testament? He does and will do the same in this present dispensation (Gen. 3:24, Ex. 34:7, Deu. 32:36, 1 Pet. 4:17, Heb. 10:30). Did He show mercy and grace to

erring ones? He does the same in a perfectly righteous way in our day (Ex. 34:6, Tit. 2:11, 3:4-5). It is a great mistake to think that in this day of grace, His standards are lower or different from those in the past. Granted that conditions under which sin is dealt with and punished are not as they were under the law, but we still stand in relationship to a holy and righteous God, thankful as well for His long-suffering and mercy that express His heart of love and compassion.

“Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear,” (Heb. 12:28).

The very first sigh on account of sin which is begotten in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of an eternal communion with God.

R. C. Chapman

Some Assembly Features and Functions

Brian Currie, Belfast

It is the conviction of many that a generation has arisen in some assemblies who having been brought up under the influence of assembly meetings have professed salvation and have been added to the assembly without any real conviction with regard to the principles of gathering. Such are open to the subtle advances of philosophy, ritualism, ecumenism and modernism. Also as we fast approach the end of this dispensation the unpleasant characteristics of men listed in 2 Timothy 3:1-4 manifest themselves more openly. Unfortunately the features of the world all too soon infiltrate the minds and lives of the saints leading to a lowering of standards and a loss of power in testimony.

It is with such background of drift and departure that this series of articles is undertaken, the purpose being to instruct the young and remind the old of the unchanging and unchangeable principles of God’s Word. In this first paper we shall consider—

1. The Gathering of the Assembly

(i) The People Who Gather.

In the New Testament the assemblies are called ‘churches of God’ (1 Cor. 11.16), ‘churches of Christ’ (Rom. 16.16) and ‘churches of the saints’ (1 Cor. 14.33). These titles tell us respectively of the—

Dignity of the Origin of the Assembly — God
 Majesty of the Ownership of the Assembly — Christ
 Suitability of the Occupants of the Assembly — Saints

Since the whole company bears these titles then the individuals who compose that company must belong to God, to Christ and be saints. This is exactly how the New Testament describes those who have been saved. I Peter 2.9, “*a people for God’s own possession*” (RV), Titus 2.14, “*a people for His (Christ’s) own possession*” and Rom. 1.7 “*beloved of God, called saints.*” It is obvious therefore that the first requirement of those who gather is that they are genuine children of God through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the commission given by the Lord Jesus included not only gospel preaching but the command to baptize, (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). A cursory reading of the Acts would reveal that the apostles carried out this commission to the letter and thus we read “*then they that gladly received His word were baptized*” (2:42), “*But when they believed . . . they were baptized, both men and women*” (8.12). See also 8:36-38; 9.:8; 10:45-48; 16:14-15,33; 18:8. It should be unnecessary to point out that nowhere does Scripture teach the sprinkling of infants, rather the teaching is that all believers should be baptized and none but believers should be baptized and that by immersion.

That Paul never expected any of the Corinthian saints to be unbaptized is obvious from his question in 1 Cor. 1:13 “*were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*” Note he does not say, “were those of you who were baptized, baptized in the name of Paul?” as if distinguishing two companies, but it is rather assumed that all who love the Lord would follow Him symbolically in death, burial and resurrection, (Rom. 6:3-4).

Thirdly, the Lord’s commission also included teaching. i.e. prior to gathering with the company there was to be a time of learning. This would ensure that a person was clear as to the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus and also the privileges and responsibilities of assembly fellowship. Since leaven spreads this clarity is vital. Twice in the New Testament Paul warns that “*a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*” In 1 Cor. 5:9 the leaven is immorality, while in Gal. 5:9 it is wrong doctrine. Prior to reception a person must be proved to be morally and doctrinally pure.

(ii) The Person to Whom they Gather.

There is only one ground of gathering and that is Matt. 18:20 “*For where two or three are gathered together in (or unto) My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*” Precious words spoken by the Lord Jesus. This excludes entirely gathering to an ordinance (Baptists), a form of government (Presbyterians), a method of worship (Methodists), or a geographical location (Church of Ireland). We have scriptural authority for alone owning the name of Christ, an

attitude which led to the early believers being nicknamed Christians in a derogatory fashion (Acts 11:26).

That Matt. 18:20 refers to a local church is easily proved by referring to verse 17 where the offended brother is enjoined to *“tell it to the church.”* It is obvious that this cannot refer to the church incorporating all the saints from Pentecost to the rapture referred to in Matt. 16:18, since it would be impossible for a brother on earth to held intercourse with Christians already at home with the Lord. It can only mean the local company of which he is a member. In the Old Testament God commanded His people to gather only where He had chosen to place His Name (Ex. 20:24; Deut. 12:5; 14:23; 16:2 etc.). The New Testament Assembly is no less the place of His Name and believers owning any other name (even ‘Brethren’) are dishonoring His Name. May it be said of us, we *“have kept His Word and hast not denied His Name”* (Rev. 3:8).

(iii) The Promise Associated with Gathering.

It might be asked “why is so much importance placed on the truth of gathering to His Name?” Matt. 18.20 again supplies the answer— “there am I in the midst.” While it is true that the Lord’s presence is promised to individual believers (Heb. 13:5) and especially those on active service (Matt. 28:20), the only promise of His Presence associated with the collective gathering is when we meet “unto His Name.”

The church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22) professed much but was not enjoying the Lord’s presence since He was outside. One feels that there is much today among the assemblies designed to make up for, or camouflage, the fact that the Lord’s presence is not realized. There is nothing in all the world to compare with being simply, solely and scripturally gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, enjoying His presence in a real definite manner.

(iv) The Purpose for Gathering.

That God never intended man to be an isolationist can be gleaned from earliest times when He said concerning Adam, *“it is not good that man should be alone”* (Gen. 2:18). This is confirmed by the Holy Spirit in Heb. 10:25, *“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.”* However some may ask, “for what type of meeting do we gather?” From a search of the Scriptures we find authority for the following meetings :

(a) Breaking of Bread—Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-32. The breaking of bread was instituted by the Lord Jesus and was observed on the first day of the week where there was an established assembly. (The practice of breaking bread privately while on holiday, etc., is foreign to God’s Word). Its design basically was two fold—to call to mind a Person, *“this do in remembrance of Me,”* and to announce an

event— *“ye do show the Lord’s death.”*

It was never intended to be administered a few times per year by priest or parson and partaken of as a prerequisite to salvation, but was rather to be the focal point of a Christian’s life when he would live throughout the week in such a way as to be suited for such a high and holy privilege as remembering the Lord. This is obvious from 1 Cor. 5:8 where the feast mentioned is not the Lord’s Supper but rather a reference to the feast of unleavened bread.

(b) United Prayer—Acts 1:14; 2:42; 4:24-31; 12:5,12. These many references underline the importance of the assembly prayer meetings which should neither be neglected nor underestimated. Perhaps the reason this meeting in particular being generally poorly attended is because it is purely spiritual. There is absolutely nothing to appeal to the flesh, but the spiritual appreciate its value.

(c) Reading of the Scriptures and Ministry — Acts 2:42; 11:26; These passages and others serve to impress upon us the importance of Bible study. We ought to be eager to learn more of the Word, Ways and Will of God.

(d) Reports—Acts 14:26-28; 15:3-4,12. From these we learn that the saints gathered to listen to brethren telling how they had seen the hand of God with them. Often we hear missionary reports which start with the commencement of the work in a region many decades ago, continue with a geographical and political description of the area and at the conclusion the saints gathered have learned very little about the work in which the brother himself is involved. Surely a report ought to be related to the spiritual state of the people and the Christians informed as to how the brother reporting had been laboring.

(e) Excommunication—This solemn subject will be dealt with later but suffice to say that both the joy of reception and the sorrow to discipline are assembly functions.

(f) Evangelism—Acts 2:14; 10:33. For the continuance of an assembly there should be a zeal for the spread of the gospel. While the true evangelist will take the gospel to places previously unreached with the gospel, those in the local assembly ought to be active with the gospel in their own district. 1 Thess. 1:8; Phil. 1:27.

It will be noted that the meetings listed above were for all the assembly. The common practice today of segregating saints by either age or sex is totally unscriptural. In fact such practices can permanently damage the unity of the assembly. The only exception is obviously when the responsible brethren meet to attend to the affairs of the assembly.

(v) The Picture of Gathering.

Among many in our Bible, John 20:19-20 affords a beautiful illustration of the assembly. Briefly note the following—

“the disciples were gathered”—only those who were the Lord’s were present.

“at evening”—this is when we gather, in the evening of the world’s history waiting for the dawn of the Lord’s return.

“the doors were shut”—there was a complete separation from the world outside.

“for fear of the Jews”—Judaism with its bedecked priesthood, ornate buildings, visible altar, visible incense, choirs, singers and instrumental music had no part in the upper room.

“Jesus stood in the midst”—this is the great attraction and yet no attraction could be greater, the assurance and enjoyment of the Lord’s Presence.

All who gather to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have a conviction about divine principles have experienced the delight of the disciples—“Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”

From Assembly Testimony, Nov/Dec, 1981
(to be continued)

In view of the lamentable defects of modern life, a type of religion certainly should not be commended simply because it is modern, or condemned simply because it is old. On the contrary, the condition of mankind is such that one may well ask what it is that made the men of past generations so great and the men of the present generations so small.

Unspeakable

F. P. P.

“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift,” (2 Cor. 9:15). The Gentile Christians at Corinth had sent a contribution to the poor Jews at Jerusalem, which caused thanksgiving. But great as was the love of these Christians, and their gift; there is a greater love and a greater gift, a gift that transcends all. God will be no man’s debtor; nor let man out-do Him, and so the apostle exclaims, *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”* It is simply inex-

pressible. We have no words in human language capable of expressing the value, or measure of God’s gift to us in the person of His beloved Son. Here the finite ends, and the infinite begins, knowing neither measure nor end.

In the twelfth chapter we again have the word “unspeakable.” The apostle escaped out of Damascus by being let down through a window in a basket. This was a very humiliating way of leaving a city, but God’s eyes were upon His servant, and He saw that he lost nothing by thus suffering humiliation for Christ’s sake: so He took him up into Paradise where he heard *“unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter,”* 2 Cor. 12:4. This was surely a great honor, accorded to but two others, Enoch and Elijah. What Paul heard and saw was simply unutterable. We may rest assured that everything in Paradise is more grand, and perfect, and glorious than our finite minds can conceive.

We have a third use of the word “unspeakable” in 1 Pet. 1:8. We have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, *“to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”* While we are waiting to receive that inheritance we have an inheritance down here, of manifold temptations and trials of our faith, which is likened to gold being tried in the fire. If we melt lead the surface oxidizes. If we clean the scum off so that we can see the beautiful silvery surface of the metal, we will find that it again scums over. Each time we repeat this process we find that there is less lead until at last there will be nothing left in the ladle. This is like the empty profession of some. The trial soon proves that they have nothing of real worth. How different it is with gold! When melted the impurities rise to the surface, and each time the scum is removed less and less will appear until finally there will be no more scum, and only pure gold will remain, which if kept melted for one hundred years will remain only pure gold. The testing of faith is like the refining of the gold. The enduring preciousness of faith will be found *“unto praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,”* (1 Pet. 8:8). What a blessed result from the testing of our faith! Joy unspeakable.

Thus we have three precious and priceless gifts of God—His Beloved Son; a heavenly home with Himself, so glorious that human language cannot describe it; and a heaven-born joy that is inexpressible. How worthy of Himself are His gifts?

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