

Hebron Messenger

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NO 23

THEY BEHELD JESUS

"And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him" (Mark 9:1'5).

"The passage that leads up to this particular verse deals with the transfiguration of our Lord, and we read that He took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain and was transfigured before them, and "his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow" (vs. 2,3). We read of a voice coming From heaven, and Matthew tells us that "when the disciples heard it they were sore afraid".

The verse we are now considering, however, tells us what happened when the little group finally came down from the Mount, and rejoined those who had been left in the valley. We are told that "when they beheld him, they were greatly amazed, and running to him they saluted him". Some have suggested that there was still some "after-glow" from the transfiguration still shining from the Lord's face, and quite possibly that was so, but our present purpose is just to consider the immediate responses of those who were meeting him in the valley. The words themselves are very simple, -just four phrases; -they "beheld him", they "were greatly amazed", they "ran to him", and they "saluted him"; -all very significant statements we dare to say.

As we have pondered these four phrases, it has come to us that here we have something which illustrates very vividly the true essence of all Christian experience. And that we shall try to explain. We would make it clear, too, that the phrases illustrate not only the four elements in initial Christian experience, but also the four factors which mark the later and progressive aspects of the Christian life. From beginning to end it will always be a matter of seeing Christ, gravitating towards Him, and embracing Him, and doing so in ever-deepening and rewarding ways.

Let us, then, say just a little about each of these four phrases as we have them in our verse.

First, we are told, "they beheld him". The original word used here is "EIDEO", - just the ordinary, word for "seeing", -though the context indicates that, in this case, it was something very very special. The "seers" here were somehow "stopped in their tracks" by what they saw. We shall have more to say about

that extra element of "amazement" a little later, but here we stay with the simple fact that they "SAW", and that it was this that set in motion the whole sequence or process that followed, -they "saw Jesus". This, in a spiritual sense, is always the beginning of true Christian experience, be it those earlier aspects or any of the later steps in the onward pilgrimage with the Lord. VISION, or the "seeing of Jesus" is the basic secret.

A few verses from the life and experience of the Apostle Paul may help us here, for he, surely, "saw Jesus", and had much to say about it. As far as his conversion is concerned, we are told that, on the Damascus road, he saw a "great light", and it is evident that he immediately realised that "light" was in fact a living person, for he cried out, "Who art thou Lord?" The answer came back, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". In a very special way, then, the Apostle had SEEN the living Jesus, - the Messiah, and that was the foundation of all that followed in the course of his ministry. As he puts it later, he had SEEN the glory of God, -"in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Perhaps that is why, in the same chapter, Paul refers to the gospel as "the gospel of the glory of CHRIST" (2 Cor. 4:4 RV). We remember, too, how, at his conversion, Ananias of Damascus had come to him and said, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldst. ..SEE THAT JUST ONE, and be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22: 14, 15).

That, incidentally, is a clear word on evangelism as a whole. ; Evangelists are chosen, first and foremost, to SEE God's Christ, and then to say what they have SEEN. And we may add that the best "SEERS" are always the best "sayers"! Our point, just here, however, is that ALL true spiritual experience, from first to last, initial or progressive, is based on a SEEING of the lord. Thank God, the Blessed Holy Spirit has been sent down to "take of the things of Christ" and show them . to us; -more and more of HIM being unveiled to us as we go on in the Christian life. The Holy Spirit always delights to show CHRIST to us.

Reverting now to our Mark 9 story, everything began when those disciples in the valley SAW JESUS. In their case they SAW Him coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration; -in ours we may "SEE" that Same Blessed One coming down to us from the mount of Glory,- "mighty to save" (See Isa.63: 1).

Summing up, then, we would suggest that all who would be saved, and all who would go on with the Lord, should pray from the heart the prayer of John 12:21, "We would SEE Jesus". That will be the releasing secret.

Blessing, will follow. (To be contd.)

R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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November 5, 2005

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

All glory and honour, praise and power, be unto our Good Shepherd, Counsellor and Helper, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath in His goodness and mercy led us into the eleventh month of the year. With hardly two months to go before the year closes upon us, may we review and reconsider our walk before the Lord for the past ten months, in the light of the year's Motto Card promises. May we sincerely consider the measure by which the Lord's tabernacle or dwelling place has been our desire and delight along with our fellow- labourers, and to what degree we enjoy His promised presence and deliverance in our troubles. And as such we are qualified to be placed as a pillar in the temple of God with His Name written upon us. May the High Priestly ministry of our everlasting Priest at the right hand of the Majesty on high be our help and our sufficiency for the future (Lev. 26:11; Psa. 91: 14, 15; Rev. 10:1 0-12).

The new month began with the All India Holy Convocation being held at Beer - Sheba, Ahmedabad, as announced before for prayer. God's servant Bro. Lazar Sen, Bro. Theodore Reginald and some of us are participating together with local elders and others, and younger brethren also in the ministry of the Word for youth gatherings. Sisters from Hebron, besides Mrs. C. Phillip from Chennai and others too are helping in the sisters' gatherings in the afternoon. The theme is taken from Jeremiah 32:27 -"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?".).

The above declaration of Jehovah to the prophet Jeremiah, speaks of His sovereignty, supremacy and sufficiency in dealing with His elect people Israel first and foremost. In spite of their idol worship, persisting in evil, provoking Him to anger with the work of their hands, He brings them unto Himself, delivering them from the captivity of Babylon, in His everlasting love and mercy. The present day conditions too demand anew examination and a new presentation of God's omnipotence, sovereignty and sufficiency. As faith is now in the crucible, it is being tested by fire and there is no fixed and sufficient resting place for the heart and mind but in the throne of God, which ruleth overall (Psa. 103:19).).

What do we mean by this expression, "the sovereignty of God" or "the supremacy of God"? To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest thou"? (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is

the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsel, thwart His purpose or resist His will (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is "the governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the "only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim.6:15). Such is the God of the Bible.).

The sovereignty of the God of the Scriptures is absolute, irresistible, and infinite. He has the right to govern the universe, which He has made for His own glory, just as He pleases. We affirm that His right is the right of the potter over the clay, i.e. He may mould the clay into whatever form He chooses, fashioning out of the same lump one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour. We affirm that He is under no rule or law outside of His own will and nature, that He is a law unto Himself. Hence He is under no obligation to give an account of His matters to any.).

God is sovereign in the exercise of His mercy. Necessarily so, for mercy is directed by the will of Him Who showeth mercy. Mercy is not a right to which man is entitled. Mercy is the adorable attribute of God by which He pities and relieves the wretched. But under the righteous government of God no one is wretched who does not deserve to be so. The objects of mercy, then, are those who are miserable, and all misery is the result of sin, hence the miserable deserve punishment, not mercy. To speak of deserving mercy is a contradiction in terms.).

God bestows His mercies on whom He pleases and withholds them as seemeth good to Himself. A remarkable illustration of this fact is seen in the manner in which God responded to the prayers of two men offered under very similar circumstances. The sentence of death was passed upon Moses for one act of disobedience and he besought the Lord for reconsideration but his desire was not gratified (Deut. 3:26). Hezekiah also was sick unto death. The Lord heard his prayer, healed him and added fifteen years in his life (2 Kings 20:1-6). It is an illustration and exemplification of Romans 9:15, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion".).

The sovereign exercise of God's mercy - pity shown to the wretched - was displayed when Jehovah became flesh and tabernacle among men. During one of the feasts of the Jews the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He came to the pool of Bethesda, where "lay a great multitude of impotent folk". For some reasons known only to Himself, the Lord putforth His power to relieve one particular sufferer (John 5:3-9). Again it is an illustration and exemplification of Romans 9:15.).

God is sovereign in the exercise of His love. It may sound a hard saying, difficult to accept. When we say that God is sovereign in the exercise of His love, we mean that He loves whom He chooses. As we are all "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), there is nothing in any of us to attract God's love. Notwithstanding He loves some. It necessarily follows that the cause of His love must be found in Himself. So the exercise of His love towards the fallen sons of men is according to His own good pleasure as it is written, "Jacob have I loved,

but Esau have I hated'~ (Rom. 9:13). If then God loved Jacob and hated Esau and that before they were born or had done either good or evil, then the reason of His love was not in them, but in Himself.).

From the language of Eph. 1 :3-5, where we read, "Blessed be the God... who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings... that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us... according to the good pleasure of his will". It was in love that God the Father predestinated us, His chosen ones, unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself - "according" -according to what? According to some excellency He discovered in them? No. Then, is it according to what He foresaw they would become? No. The inspired answer is "according to the good pleasure of his will".).

God is sovereign in the exercise of His grace also. For grace is favour shown to the undeserving, yea -to the hell deserving. Grace has been defined as the unmerited favour of God and if unmerited, none can claim it as their inalienable right. If grace is unearned and undeserved, then none is entitled to it. If grace is a gift, then none can demand it. Therefore salvation is by grace, the free gift of God, which He bestows on whom He pleases. Because salvation is by grace, the very chief of sinners is not beyond the reach of divine mercy. Because salvation is by grace, boasting is excluded and God gets all the glory.).

In a remarkable manner divine grace was exercised at the time of the Saviour's birth. The Incarnation of God's Son was one of the greatest events in the history of the universe and yet its actual occurrence was not made known to all mankind. Instead, it was specially revealed to Bethlehem's shepherds and the wise men of the east. The illiterate shepherds were singled out for that peculiar honour and the leamed and the eminent were passed by. Why was it revealed to foreigners and not to those in whose midst He was born? Here is a wonderful foreshadow of God's dealings with the human race throughout the entire Christian (grace) dispensation -sovereign in the exercise of His grace, bestowing His favours on whom He pleases, often on the most unlikely and unworthy. May the sovereignty of our Lord, His supremacy and sufficiency through faith and patience be our portion and possession to carry us through seemingly hard and difficult situations in the path of our pilgrimage and course.).

The elders and saints of the assemblies in Mumbai would have usto thank and praise the Lord for the special gatherings held recently in Panvel, in a rented school facility. More than six hundred participated, quite a number deciding for the first time.).

The Lord blessed the witness and ministry of Bro. Francis from Sri Lanka, accompanied by Bro. Jacob, in St. Thomas Mt., Chennai, Kadapa and finally at Hebron during their itinerary in India from 10th to 25th October. Pray for the comfort of Bro. Francis and family as their eldest son Sanjay Vijay Singh was promoted to Glory on the 10th of August. He was in the ministry in France among Singala speaking believers.).

Though belated, we mention the Home call of Bro. Paul Guruappa who served in various assemblies in Rayalseema faithfully for more than four decades. Pray for the comfort of his wife and children.). Praying that we be granted faith and assurance of His promised presence and provisions as we follow to know and

serve Him, obedient to the heavenly vision,).

Rom. 11:22,33,36 , Deut. 29 : 29 , Psa. 115: 3,9,12.

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K. Phillip.

A LIVING WELL -4

BAKHT SINGH

At Jabbok Jacob became Israel, a prince with God. He learned to take hold of God, and went still further in his experience with God. He I thought Esau would kill him, but he found to his surprise that the same Esau ran and embraced him. Those who were once enemies now became friends and all the fears Jacob once had, vanished away (Gen.33:4). Esau could even see the living God in Jacob now. God's promise in Isaiah 54:17 was fulfilled. Also "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zech 2:8) became true in Jacob's life. When the Lord comes into your life, He takes away all fears, first of all the fear of death, and then the fear of man and other fears (Heb. 13:6). That was the experience Jacob had in Genesis 33. When he came to Shechem, first of all he built an altar and called it El-Elohe Israel, which means, God, the very God of Israel, the God Whom Israel knew personally, because he had met Him in Genesis 32. God had become real to him, and began to work through him; so he built an altar in order to praise and worship God. Now he could understand what God was trying to say to him in chapter 28. After he had that deep experience of the living God, he dug a well which speaks of his experience. There he had found peace. There God had become real to him, and from that day onwards his whole life was transformed. If you want to become a well of living water, you have to have a definite experience of the living God. Bible knowledge will not make you such a well, howsoever deep it may be. Knowledge will not take away fear. It will not give you peace, but the loving and living God can give you real peace. Jacob was completely broken in Genesis 32. He learned to depend upon God wholly and solely. Before that he was depending upon his schemes and his mother's schemes for blessing. All their schemes and lies failed. When God touched the hollow of his thigh, He took away his physical strength and taught him to trust God completely, and live upto the new name which God Himself had given him.

In Genesis 34, a greater temptation came to Jacob. Shechem the prince of that city, wanted to marry Dinah, Jacob's daughter. His father Hamor went to Jacob with a proposal and said, "The whole land is before you, you can stay among us, and make business and trade with us". What a subtle temptation! And that is how many believers have been drawn away. They were good wells in the beginning; they loved God, they had faith in Him, and were full of good works, but they were tempted to marry unbelievers. They argued that they would be mutually benefited and profited. But the result was, they became spiritually barren. God helped Jacob at that time in that situation (v. 25), and saved him from becoming a dry well. If you have any such temptation, take warning. You can become prosperous in earthly things; you can get riches or worldly gain, but

you will get dry spiritually and barren. Through mixed marriages many believers have lost their first love and joy.

In Gen. 35:1 God said to Jacob, "Arise, and go up to Bethel". Even though God blessed Jacob wonderfully in the past, he had far greater blessings in store for him. It is God's purpose to give great blessings to every believer in the days to come (Eph. 3:20). God wanted to give Jacob greater blessings, but He could not do so because there were some hidden strange gods in his family. According to Gen. 31 :19, Jacob's wife Rachel had stolen the images of her father. Jacob did not know about it; but because of it God was unable to bless him fully. In chapter 35 Jacob said to his family, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments"(v. 2). Then all the images were buried under the oak near the well. From that day, God began to bless Jacob abundantly, and people round about began to realize that he was a man of God. Unknown to father, mother, husband, wife or children, the enemy gains ground in the lives of believers, through some friendship or association. When that is put away, there will be fullness of blessing. That is the message of Jacob's well.

(To be contd.)

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NO 24

THEY BEHELD JESUS

"And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him" (Mark 9:15).

"In our last issue we mentioned that the four phrases in the above verse illustrate very vividly the true essence of all Christian experience. The simple phrases are, "they beheld him", they "were greatly amazed", they "ran to him" and they "saluted him". We have already considered the first one, saying that in a spiritual sense; (a true Christian experience begins by seeing Jesus. The blessed Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and reveals them to us. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:13, 14). Blessings follow when we SEE JESUS.

The next phrase in our special verse tells us that, on seeing Jesus, all the people "were greatly amazed". Other translations render it, they were "overwhelmed with wonder" (NIV) or "overcome with awe" (NEB), -evidently a very startling experience for those concerned!

This particular detail would certainly support the view that there was some lingering "afterglow" on the face and Person of our Lord as He came down from the Mount, but, be that as it may, we simply want to say, here, that there is always an inward and compelling "soul-awe" when a human being, helped by the Holy Spirit, begins to "see Jesus". We would even go so far as to say that the presence or absence of that "awe", or that "amazement", is a clear indicator of whether or not the person in question has really seen Jesus at all, -that is, in a spiritual sense. And we would say, too, that this "soul-awe" is something, which will greatly increase as we go on in the spiritual life. We know, indeed, of some believers whose "awe at Christ" becomes evident whenever they so much as pronounce His Name. A certain "hush" seems to come over them, and onlookers sense the powerful and gracious presence of the Lord.

We remember, too, how Isaiah the prophet could only cry, "Woe is me, for I am undone" when he saw that same glorious Person (See Isa. 6:5, John 12:41). And we believe it is essentially the Same with us. Seeing Jesus is, in fact, the beginning of a necessary inward "undoing" essential to glorious "newness of life" IN CHRIST (Rom. 6:4). And that again. is progressive. Continual beholding, in

other words, leads to a continual and blessed brokenness of spirit before the Lord.

Christian hymn-writers have frequently touched on this matter in their heart-moving and Christ-exalting hymns. C.H. Gabriel, for instance, writes:

"I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me;

Confused at the grace which so freely He proffers me:

I tremble to know that for me He was crucified;

That for me a sinner He suffered and bled and died".

- "O IT IS WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL TO ME".

Again, we cannot here say all that we would about this extra factor of "amazement"; but we do long for more of it in our own hearts. O to be numbered amongst those who are "greatly amazed" at Christ, -not only in His dying love but also in His risen power and His exalted glory. Christ is the One before Whom the angels veil their faces, and we would, at least, be "stopped in our tracks" by a sight of that Dear Person, finding our hearts "moved at Him" (Song 5:4), or, as the New International Version puts it, "My heart began to pound for Him". Something like that will surely be the effect when we, too, SEE JESUS.

We conclude this section by remarking again that here is an "amazement" which strikes at the heart of all inborn self-strength, and makes us look away to Christ for all we need. In a deep sense, it is a seeing that slays us, and leads on to a glorious renewal in fellowship with Christ (See Rev. 1 :17,18). (To be contd.)
C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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November 11th, 2005

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Sovereign, supreme and sufficient, able to save us to the uttermost, as . He ever liveth to make intercession for us. His High Priestly prayer within the veil for His saints and His Church should inspire us to pray in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. May the Lord enable us all to

maintain such a ministry of prayer and supplication, personally, family wise and in the fellowship of the local church, amidst all other activities of the Gospel. Hence we would consider a few aspects concerning prayer, as the Lord hath designed and directed us to be doing (1 Tim. 6:15, 16; Rom. 8:26,34; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20, 21; Luke 18:1,7,8).

Why has God appointed that we should pray? The vast majority of people would reply, -in order that we may obtain from God the things, which we need. While this is one of the reasons of prayer, it is by no means the chief one. Moreover, it considers prayer only from the human side and prayer surely needs to be viewed from the Divine side. Let us look then at some of the reasons why God hath bidden us to pray.

First and foremost, prayer has been appointed that the Lord Himself should be honoured. God requires that we should recognize that He is indeed, "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15). God requires that we should own His universal dominion. In petitioning God for rain, Elijah did but confess His control over the elements. In praying to God to deliver a poor sinner from the wrath to come, we acknowledge that "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). In supplicating His blessing on the Gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth, we declare His rulership over the whole world. Again God requires that we worship Him, and prayer is an act of worship, or includes worship. Prayer is an act of worship inasmuch as it is the prostrating of the soul before Him; inasmuch as it is calling upon His great and holy Name; inasmuch as it is the owning of His goodness, power, immutability, and grace, inasmuch as it is the recognition of His sovereignty, owned by submission to His will. It is highly significant to notice in this connection, that the temple was not termed by Christ as the House of sacrifice, but instead, the House of prayer.

Again prayer redounds to God's glory, for in prayer we do but acknowledge our dependency upon Him. When we humbly supplicate the Divine Being, we cast ourselves upon His power and mercy. In seeking blessings from God we own that He is the Author and Fountain of every good and perfect gift. That prayer brings glory to God is further seen from the fact that prayer calls faith into exercise, and nothing is honouring and pleasing to Him as the confidence of our hearts.

In the second place, prayer is appointed by God for our spiritual blessing, as a means for our growth in grace. When seeking to learn the design of prayer, this should ever occupy us before we regard prayer as a means for obtaining the supply of our need. Prayer is designed by God for our humbling. Prayer, real prayer, is a coming into the presence of God, and a sense of His awful Majesty produces a realisation of our nothingness and unworthiness. Again prayer is designed by God for the exercise of our faith. Faith is begotten through the Word (Rom.10:17), but is exercised in prayer; hence we read of "the prayer of faith". Again prayer calls love into action. Through the direct answers vouchsafed to our prayers, our love to God is increased. "I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications" (Psa. 116:1). We may, God helping, continue further on this subject in our next issue.

The All India Holy Convocation held at Beer-sheba, Ahmedabad , concluded on the Lord's Day, the 6th November. The meetings drew a company of nearly four

hundred, from various parts of Gujarat, besides others from Hindi speaking areas and also Kalimpong. God's servants Bros. Theodore Reginald, Lazar Sen and myself participated in the ministry of the Word. We sought to highlight the theme "...I am the LORD... is there anything too hard for me?" (Jer. 32:27), from various angles, not only the release of Israel from the Babylonian captivity, as seen from the Scriptural context of this verse, viz., the promise of God to Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac (Gen.18:14), and also Gabriel's declaration to Mary concerning the birth of our Lord (Luke 1 :34-38). In all cases, the Lord's promises were fulfilled in His appointed time, and it demanded the prayer of faith and obedience of faith from the human side (Jer.29:10-13). Jeremiah was asked to call upon God (33:3) for the captivity of Israel to be turned and the nation brought back to prosperity, cured and cleansed to be a glorious name for the Lord (33:6-11). Besides their social welfare, they had to learn to offer the sacrifice of praise "in his house", which was to be newly built under Ezra through the returning remnant. So God's predetermined purpose to dwell among His people is continued in the Old Testament and finally triumphantly culminated as seen in Revelation chapters 18, 19 and 21. The final total fall of Babylon, -religious, political or commercial, -whatever aspect you look at it, is seen in chapter 18. Then the Bride is ready and God's Dwelling Place, the New Jerusalem descends in chapter 21. God destroys Babylon of which it is written, "How much she hath glorified herself..." (Rev. 18:7). Babylon is the product of human planning and power for human glory, which God hath put to nought through the cross of His Son. Jeremiah 9:23 refers to three realms of glorying to which the men of the world can fall a prey, robbing God of His glory Even believers are in danger of being carried away by such Babylonish glory .The Lord help us all to discern what is Babylonish, and depart from it, and be over comers to be partakers with Christ in His glory.

Bro. and Sis. Arvind Christian covet our prayers as they left Surat on the 19th October to be with their daughter and family in San Francisco, US. We do praise the Lord for the many years of ministry he fulfilled in the assemblies in India in fellowship with us.

Praying that we may be kept moving and ministering in the orbit of His will, working and wisdom: for His eternal glory in His Church,

Rom. 8.28-30, 2Tim. 1: 9,10, Isa. 43: 13-16.

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.PHILLIP.

A LIVING WELL -5

BAKHT SINGH

In John 4:5 we see that the well Jacob dug at Shechem became the inheritance of Joseph, because that land was given to him. Joseph's bones, which were in Egypt, were brought and buried at the very same spot in Shechem. (Read Gen. 48:20-22; 50:25; Joshua 24:32). Thus there are three

things of note in the same place -Jacob's well, the spot where strange gods were buried, and the tomb of Joseph. The well was a symbol of Joseph's life also. We have seen already how Jacob's life became a living well with plenty of living water. Now the same spot is given to Joseph. Jacob could see during his last years that the life of Joseph had become such a well. It was evident in his wisdom, prosperity and the blessing of God upon him.

In Gen. 37:13-23 we see that Joseph began his life in that very place, Shechem. When he was 17 years old he was cast into a dry pit by his own brethren. By this experience God was preparing him for a high position and a triumphant life. We too have to go through such experiences, till we put aside our human glory and wisdom. Even though the brethren of Joseph hated him and tried to kill him the Lord was preparing him for a high position, wherein he would be the means of blessing to many nations. To that end he had to go through trials, sufferings and hardships. He was 30 years of age when he was brought before Pharaoh. For thirteen years he went through different trials. First he was taken away from his father who loved him so much, and his coat of many colours was removed from him. Then he was cast by his brethren into a dry pit. Later on we see that he was sold as a slave. By all these means God was moulding Joseph to His own end and purpose. If he was to supply bread to the people of that land during famine, he must be impartial, which is not easy at the time of famine and scarcity of food. To the people of so many countries he had to supply grain without partiality. God had to take away all objects of his affection that he might treat everyone alike. In one sense he was dead to the affection of his father and all other relations.

For us also our Lord has said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). We have to go through the same experience of dryness and death in order to love the Lord more than anyone else. By taking Joseph away from his father and brethren and sending him to a far country, the Lord gave him a new love for all people. He had been much loved by his father because he was the son of his old age. It was not possible for him ever to get as much love anywhere else as he had received from his father. But he was taken away as a slave to another country, because that was the only way by which he could become a source of blessing to people. If we really want to do God's perfect will, then we must learn to love God more than anyone else at any cost.

In the empty pit the Lord was telling Joseph that he had to be emptied of all affection, honour and everything he had. He might have had many desires and plans in his heart, but God broke all his plans and took him away from his father and relations. That is how God may have to deal with us also. God purposely breaks all our plans, howsoever high or precious they may be; one by one they must all be broken. He takes away our friends one by one. Those people whom we love so much will be taken away from us. That is the way the Lord takes us through, so that we may become useful to Him and more fruitful. He will take us wherever He likes, far away from friends and places to which we are attached. Some people are unable to do God's will because of certain affection. They are hindered from doing His will because of some loved one in their lives; but we have to obey God at any cost. What a great reward God gave to Joseph in Gen. 39:2-4, 21-23! On the one hand was that great sacrifice while he was young, and on the other hand the offer of a great reward. The Lord was with him, and

because of Joseph others were blessed by God. Those in the master's house looked upon Joseph with great respect. The same thing will happen to us also if we are in God's will. He may take us to far off places, among enemies and strangers, and yet we will become the means of blessing to many. Even though Joseph was tempted with a severe temptation, the Lord helped him and gave him victory, and he was lifted up (Psa. 105: 16-22). God had planned to give Joseph the great responsibility of supplying bread to all the nations during the great famine, for which purpose he had to be extremely wise. He had to go through thirteen years of painful experiences, in order to be trained for that position (Psalm 105:19).

When the Lord took Joseph away from home because of the jealousy and hatred of his brethren who wanted to harm him and when he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and later imprisoned, he meditated upon God's Word. "Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him" (Psa. 105: 19). 'Those 9ays of meditation were of great help to him. He was given divine wisdom. As we meditate upon the Word of God during our sufferings and trials, we get wisdom. In our lives we have to go through such painful experiences. Whatever God was allowing in Joseph's life became his experience and he became a wise man. We read further in Psa. 105:22, that he had to teach wisdom to the high officials. "'To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom". 'Those officials were highly trained in good universities for their jobs; yet none of them were efficient at the time of famine. So at the command of Pharaoh all of them came to the feet of Joseph. He trained them and taught them to work with him in the distribution of corn. If he found any of the officials corrupt, he had to put them in jail, and it was a very bad task. Pharaoh knew that Joseph would never take bribes. So he told Joseph, "If you find in my servants any corruption, you can bind them and put them into jail". Because Joseph was trained through many painful situations, he was able to capture the high officials. 'Through sufferings and testings his life became like a well, and he supplied food to all people. 'Through one man many lives were saved.

There is a great scarcity of the Word of God everywhere, as it is written in Amos 8:11-14. 'That prophecy of the end days is being fulfilled before our very eyes. 'There is a famine for the Word of God. Even though God's Word is preached in many places it is not the pure word of God; they give man's word instead. 'They do not give words of life, nor do they give pure Gospel. 'There are so many preachers who go about with wrong motives, because they want money and honour. 'They use many schemes and devices to get money from America. Do not believe all those who go about with tracts and Bibles as though they are doing God's work, for some of them do it with wrong motives in their hearts. 'There are few however, who have a real message from God and help people spiritually. If you really want to be used by God you will have to go through many trials like Joseph. 'Then you will become a well of water to give the Word of God in power and with great authority.

(To be contd.)

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