Genesis - Commentaries by L. Douglas Nicolet

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 09

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“The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth” (Gen. 9:16).

My beloved wife doesn’t like the sudden, often violent summer thunderstorms marked by high winds, thunder, lightning and, at times, hail which are so common in the Midwest. Yet I’ve always marveled at these awesome displays of God’s power. Brilliant blue-white flashes streaking across the night sky accompanied by rolling booms and sudden claps of thunder—a breathtaking display of power lighting up summer nights with a far greater majesty than man-made fireworks could ever produce.

During daytime thunderstorms, however, we often see a very different, though still majestic display of His power beautiful rainbows created by sunlight shining through countless billions of tiny raindrops, displayed against a backdrop of dark, towering thunderheads. Each one of the bow’s gorgeous colors signifies much more than God’s covenant mercy in Noah’s day. They present a lovely reminder of the innumerable glories of our Lord Jesus Christ very God and perfect Man illuminated by the light from heaven shining against the dark clouds of man’s sin.

God is “light” and “love” (1 John 1:5; 4:8) and nature is but one stage upon which these divine qualities are displayed. As divine light shines through the clouds and rain of life’s storms, the glories of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ glisten in splendor to remind the weary heart that “His compassions fail not. They are new every morning” (Lam. 3:22-23). The rain and clouds of trial and adversity merely serve to display and enhance those glories which shine out from the risen Son of God.

In like manner, our marriages, whether enjoying balmy days and soft breezes or enduring stormy nights of trial and testings, may still always display the beauty and glory of love. The garden of spices (picturing the joys and delights of marriage) in the Song of Songs provided just such a display, whether the pleasant south wind was softly blowing or the cold, harsh north wind howled (see chapter 4:12-16). In every condition of life, love’s fragrance flowed out of that beautiful garden of delight.

If the wonderful garden of marriage is to thrive and blossom, sending out a grand, colorful display of the glories of love between husband and wife (no matter how dark the circumstances), the conduct of each must be directed by God’s light and founded in His love. In order to send forth love’s sweet fragrance on every occasion, husbands and wives must act before God in every detail of their relationship with love for one another as the motivation for every action.

“Love is strong as death.... Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned” (Song of Sol. 8:6-7).

“By love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). “[Love suffers] long and is kind” (1 Cor. 13:4). “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 08

“The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark” (Gen. 8:9).

My wife and I were on a sightseeing walk in Washington D. C. on a hot and humid day. Street vendors were doing a brisk business selling bottles of water and soda to thirsty tourists. We had covered a lot of territory that morning, walking through the Capitol Mall to the Lincoln Memorial and viewing other points of interest, before our journey took us past the White House, the Ford Theater and the house just across the street where President Lincoln died. But by early afternoon one desire alone dominated our thoughts we were hot and tired and longed for a quiet, cool place to get away from the heat, bustle and noise of the city. Thankfully, we found just such an “oasis” in an air conditioned little deli near the White House. The time we spent together in that haven was more enjoyable than all the interesting sights we had seen on our walk.

For both partners, marriage ought to provide a similar rest and joy in the midst of a restless, morally defiled world. There are many pressing issues which rightfully require our daily attention. But our marriage union ought to be like the ark a haven where, at the end of a long, difficult and trying day, both husband and wife take time to enjoy love, peace and rest with each other and the Lord.

In Adam and Eve’s day, God had walked in Eden in the “cool of the day” seeking their fellowship. But by Noah’s time, the sin which caused Adam and Eve to hide from God had so ruined the world that He destroyed it by the flood. In that judged, post-flood world there was corruption found to satisfy the appetite of the unclean raven. But the clean little dove could find no rest apart from the ark’s peaceful, pure and safe sanctuary.

Partners in Christian marriages must constantly and diligently guard against the temptation to use the habits of the “present evil world” to feed and bring satisfaction to their union. Both husband and wife must daily and diligently maintain their marriage in purity and the fear of God. Tasting the freely available, morally corrupt food the world feeds on its perverted passions, lifestyles and habits will quickly defile the God-given natural delights of marriage.

There exists a great quagmire of moral filth, eagerly consumed by a godless world excused as being romantic excitement carried on apart from God's pure and holy institution of marriage. The habits and manners of those who, like the raven, willingly feed on such moral degradation can twist and taint the purity and delight which God intends to be fully enjoyed in marriage (Prov. 5:19; Song of Sol. 5:10-16).

Christ-centered marriages will bring to that wonderful union joy, satisfaction and rest in the midst of a corrupt and defiled world. "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor" (1 Thess. 4:4).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 07

"Yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth" (Gen. 7:4).

Sitting in a commuter train at a stop, I watched as a businessman made a desperate dash from his car to the station entrance. He was nearing the boarding gate when the train began slowly moving away. I saw his shoulders sag, his stride slow and come to a stop, as he, with a resigned look on his face, stood watching while the train left him behind. Time was up it was too late. He would have to wait for the next train. I'm sure the engineer and the conductor both saw him, but schedules must be kept and even the extra fifteen seconds the commuter needed to board was fifteen seconds too long for them. His desperate exertions to catch the train were not sufficient to move them to extend him mercy.

On the wedding day, nothing seems more perfect or worthy of the other's love than the one they are marrying. In those early days neither partner needs to be reminded that "your wish is my command." But as time passes, a multitude of little annoyances can begin to beset marital bliss.

Grace should overlook and mercy should overrule, but too often self is overbearing with their partner. "Why do you always wear your shoes on my clean carpet?" "Why do you always overspend my budget?" The question each should be asking is, "Why am I not willing to let love 'cover a multitude of sins'?"

There are many times in marriage when a husband or a wife will be late to the train. Then comes the test of real love will their spouse "wait an extra fifteen seconds" for them? Impatience, frustration (or worse yet, open anger) can so easily stop the flow of love, grace and mercy needed to keep the marriage union happy, growing and strong.

How we need to show that same spirit of grace in our marriages that God showed in Noah's day! Having already in grace waited for over one hundred years while Noah testified concerning coming judgment, God mercifully waits "yet seven days." Why? Was it not to see if any of those mocking Noah's preaching (see 2 Peter 2:5) during all that time might still at the last moment come desperately running to gain entrance into the ark's safety? If our loving God is willing to show such infinite grace and mercy to unworthy sinners, cannot a husband and wife show the spirit of loving patience towards each other?

A helpful motto containing the secret for continual marital bliss is found in the words of the Apostle Paul: "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" (1 Cor. 6:7). Indeed, husbands and wives, why don't we? The next time the budget is overspent, try telling your wife this: "Honey, do you suppose I need to increase our budget a little bit?" It's amazing what grace does.

"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13). "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind" (1 Cor. 13:4). "Let your gentleness be known of all" (Phil. 4:5 JND). "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom. 16:20).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 06

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.... But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:5,8).

In Noah's day, man was totally indifferent to God—though his awful sin was "naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). The unholy association of fallen angels with the daughters of men produced giants (see Genesis 6:4; Jude 6) physical and moral giants of wickedness.

Man's degenerate heart, the source of those awful imaginations and actions, has tainted with lust and violence all that God has instituted for his blessing. The institution of marriage is one of those spheres that has sadly degenerated into a union all too often marred by lust, depravity and perversion.

In the midst of that awful corruption before the flood, one man "found grace" in God's sight. By faith Noah moved in the fear of God and saved his house (Heb. 11:7). His actions not only made him a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5), but they provide us with valuable principles which we may apply with profit to the saving and strengthening of our marriages.

Three things specially characterized Noah, and, if they characterize our marriages, they will provide that union with happiness, stability and permanence.

(1) "Noah was a just man." In a society that had no interest in God's thoughts, Noah was upright (just) in all his ways. He judged by God's standards, making God (rather than the world) the reference point of his thoughts. Husbands and wives need to take care that current moral

and social standards of this world are never allowed to replace God's thoughts as revealed in His Word. It is very easy to get caught up in the current thinking of the present evil world. If we Christians give place to such thoughts, our marriage unions will suffer great damage rather than enjoying lasting happiness.

(2) "Perfect in his generations." Noah was not a "double minded man"; he was stable. He didn't follow the world, when that seemed the desirable or easy thing, while trying to please the Lord. His eye was single to please God at all times in his life. When first married, a couple finds it no great difficulty to constantly seek to please their mate in all things. But if not first united in heart to follow God, marital devotion will eventually wane and turn into marital disaster.

(3) "Noah walked with God." Noah had a choice—separation from the world or losing the joy of fellowship with God. God honored his faithfulness, for though we don't read that his wife and family had the same desire, they were graciously preserved with Noah from judgment. Happy, lasting marriages have mates that daily commune with each other. But personal communion with God comes first if our marriages are to enjoy permanence. May we be like "Zacharias... and his wife... Elisabeth... they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:56). Such marriages will last.

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 04

"Cain... builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch" (Gen. 4:17).

Enoch, the first city built by man, was no doubt very different from our modern-day cities with their skyscrapers, subways, airports, freeways and shopping malls. But the moral characteristics of that city and all built since are the same, for it was built after Cain willingly left the presence of God. Apart from God, man brought into his city all that might afford his heart happiness in separation from his Creator.

However, the moral character of the city Enoch built begins and ends with two awful, solemn qualities—lust and violence. In verse 19 we read of Lamech, who tried to remedy his ungratified desire by marrying two wives. This excess, born of lust, seemed to produce pleasant, harmless and useful fruit: agriculture, commerce, the arts and sciences (see ch. 4:20-22).

But his two wives didn't produce peace for Lamech, who had rejected God's order ("for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife") violence and death mark his life. "Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt" (Gen. 4:23).

No matter how pleasant marriage circumstances may seem, when a husband and wife allow divided affections towards one another, the result will be sorrows, wounds and devastation.

Consider the life of dear Jacob or Solomon to see how divided affections ruin marriage joy. Jacob's wife Leah knew she was hated by Jacob (Gen. 29:31), but more solemnly, God knew it and restrained, for the time being, fruit from Rachel, the wife Jacob loved. As we follow dear Jacob's history, it is to read a sad record of strife, deceit, jealousy and violence among the sons born of his two wives and his two concubines. What sorrow and dishonor!

Solomon, the wisest man who lived (apart from the blessed Son of God as man), is perhaps the most sorrowful case recorded. As king he was clearly not to multiply wives to himself (Deut. 17:17), yet he took "seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines," and his "wives turned away his heart" from the Lord (1 Kings 11:3).

Oh! for simplicity of heart to obey the precious Word of God in order that we might enjoy happy, fruitful, satisfying marriages a union God desires one man and one woman to delight in all their life.

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22).

"Rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe.... Be thou ravished always with her love" (Prov. 5:18-19).

"I sat down under his shadow with great de-light.... His fruit was sweet.... He brought me to the banqueting house.... His banner over me was love" (Song of Sol. 2:3-4).

"Let each have his own wife" (1 Cor. 7:2 JnD).

"Husbands, love your wives" (Eph. 5:25).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 1998, Editorial: Drawing Near to Jesus

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph.... And his brethren... were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near" (Gen. 45:3-4).

It is not surprising that Joseph's brethren were troubled as they stood in his royal presence. Their guilty consciences reminded them of that time years before when, in their wicked jealousy, they had contrived to kill him. Now, as the second ruler in Egypt, he no longer languished in that horrible, dry pit, devoid of any comfort, while the cruel brethren ate bread, indifferent to his sorrow. The despised "slave" was now the ruler.

The brothers realized that the sin they had so carefully tried to cover by the blood of the slain lamb, in which Joseph's beautiful coat had been dipped, was "naked and opened" to all (Heb. 4:13).

In a later day, the zealous Saul of Tarsus had a similar, yet more glorious revelation from the splendor of heaven, as he heard the words, "I am Jesus." Immediately the proud, young Pharisee fell trembling on his face in the presence of divine glory. What could Saul so wretched and undone by the guilt of his zealous persecutions of that blessed name expect but swift judgment for his deeds?

Throughout the Word, there are many like examples of undeniable guilt and undeserved grace for example, Mephibosheth, the young Egyptian servant of the Amalekite, and the guilty publican. Each came to a time when they had to confront the hopelessness of their condition. Yet, at these solemn moments, grace and love triumph over judgment.

Saul is told to rise, for he is to serve the One whom he has been persecuting (Acts 9:6). Mephibosheth learns that he will eat continually at the king's table (2 Sam. 9:7). The Egyptian receives undeserved nourishment and lives (1 Sam. 30:11). The publican goes "down to his house justified" (Luke 18:14), and Joseph's guilty brothers receive love, forgiveness, freedom and food.

Instead of prison chains or executioner's sword, they hear a loving invitation: "Come near to me, I pray you." They finally become the willing recipients of Joseph's overflowing heart of love an earlier display of the spirit of David weeping with Jonathan, "until David exceeded." How much more our blessed God has exceeded in His love for us!

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

The believer, once "dead in trespasses and sins" and having "no hope, and without God in the world," has found in the Lord Jesus unconditional, eternal love. The depth of that divine love is seen when He weeps at Lazarus's grave, while the delight and desire of His heart for His loved ones shines in His prayer to His Father (John 17). The Lord desires that each of His blood-bought own would "draw near... in full assurance of faith," for He rejoices over each with joy, and "He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

We are infinitely more blessed than Queen Esther, who in all her glory and beauty still had no personal assurance that she would be welcomed in the king's presence. All she could say was, I will "go in unto the king... and if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16).

Joseph's brethren receive his tears and kisses. It is just so with the prodigal son, who received the father's embrace and the father's kisses. What was their part in such tender displays of love? Their guilt and their drawing "near" to the ones they had offended.

Let us, redeemed saints each one who is part of that which caused Him "the travail of His soul" eagerly rise and open the door at the sound of His tender knock and loving, beseeching voice.

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20).

"With desire I have desired to eat... with you" (Luke 22:15).

"Having loved His own... He loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 1999, Editorial: A Little Food and a Little Present

"And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said... Go again, buy us a little food.

"And... Israel said... If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds" (Gen. 43:2,11).

Unbelief in the goodness of God a sad, restricting influence in believers' lives is strikingly illustrated in the life of Jacob. But if we are to gain blessing from this account, it must serve as a mirror to our hearts—hearts which are prone to the same miserly thoughts of our gracious, giving God.

The Lord appeared to Jacob, as he fled from his brother Esau, with promises of rich, undeserved blessing. Regarding the land through which his grandfather Abraham had walked, the Lord said, "To thee will I give it, and to thy seed." Regarding Jacob's family, He said, "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth... and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Regarding Jacob's protection, Jehovah promised, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.... I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken" (Gen. 28:13-15). But poor Jacob's first thought of that place where he had met Jehovah and heard such wonderful things was, "How dreadful is this place!" How like our own unbelief!

For the next 21 years, Jacob received daily reminders of God's rich grace. He had fled from his father's house empty, but now he returned full blessed with children, servants, flocks, herds and great possessions (Gen. 31-33). Yet when Jacob hears that Esau is coming to meet him (Gen. 32:6), he forgets the Lord's care. "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed."

Later, after his beloved Joseph had been lost (Gen. 37:31-37), yet another trial comes a famine. Still seemingly unaware that God was working for his blessing, Jacob hears that "there is corn in Egypt" and sends his sons to buy food (Gen. 42:12). But not one word of confidence in Jehovah do we hear from the lips of this dear, aged pilgrim.

Of course, the time comes when their supply of food from Egypt runs out (Gen. 43:2). How happy would it have been to have heard Jacob, in faith, repeat the words of Abraham: "God will provide." Instead, looking only with the eyes of nature, he tells his sons, "Go again, buy us a little food." He desires to buy only a little, because he knew his resources were insufficient to meet the famine, which had become greater to

him than Jehovah!

Beloved brethren, our hearts are not one bit different! Never could we measure the limitless, divine provisions which God's infinite grace has given to each of us! Yet when a famine looms in our lives, we, like Jacob, forget the largeness of His supply, thinking instead how we may get by with just a little food. How dishonoring to the "Giver of all good" are all such faithless thoughts! God has not withheld from us the "Son of His love" (Col. 1:13 JND), having "delivered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). Such divine provision is the very opposite of littleness. With the gift of His beloved Son comes the promise to "freely give us all things." Our Father does not want His children existing as spiritual paupers, barely sustained by a little food.

He who does "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" invites us to "prove" Him and see "if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10).

With Jacob, we also see that not only was his heart constrained in trying to meet his needs ("buy... a little"), but it was equally constrained in giving to his benefactor take "a present, a little balm, and a little honey."

This same spirit of littleness in giving may mark us also. If we refuse to draw upon the unlimited resources and largeness of our Father, the result will be that rather than a rich outpouring of thanksgiving and praise (Heb. 13), our hearts are only capable of giving to Him a little present.

Oh! that we might be enlarged to enjoy abundantly the exceeding great and precious promises which are ours in Christ! Will there not then be rivers of living water flowing from us?

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 1998, Remembering Him

"Then spake the chief butler... I do remember my faults this day" (Gen. 41:9).

Joseph had not asked the butler to remember his faults, but to remember himself. Thankfulness to and love for Joseph should have motivated him to take advantage of the first opportunity to carry out his kind benefactor's request. Instead, self-satisfaction and self-importance caused sad forgetfulness.

How much the butler lost! He lost a wonderful opportunity to comfort Joseph's heart, a tremendous opportunity to speak well of Joseph in Pharaoh's presence, and the butler's forgetfulness kept Joseph in prison a place where he was hindered in blessing the people of Egypt.

Happily, the butler finally did remember Joseph. Confessing his "faults," the butler began a course of events which through Joseph brought blessing to the world and to Jacob and his family.

May our blessed God exercise our hearts that we not forget our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." Should it not be the delight of each heart to answer that request as often as possible? Is not His worthiness and His joy at our remembrance of Himself motive enough for us?

"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house" (Gen. 40:14).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 03

"Yea, hath God said?" (Genesis 3:1)

History records some unprincipled explorers, who, making contact with native people in newly discovered lands, gained their confidence in order to plunder their wealth. They offered the natives worthless baubles bright, colorful beads, pins, yarns or other stuff in order to steal from those naive people treasures of jewels, gold and silver. Had some wise person been present who loved the natives, perhaps those cultures would not have been so easily pillaged, ravaged and eventually destroyed.

Yet in all the annals of history, none has been more brutally devastated by a more cunning enemy than the human race a devastation that took place in the beautiful, pristine Garden of Eden. There Satan, the master of deception, gained entrance, beginning from that moment his awful work of beguiling the woman, offering for her innocence those forbidden baubles of the knowledge of good and evil.

But the serpent's master stroke was the way in which he circumvented Eve's husband, the responsible head over creation. God had given Adam the charge of guarding and keeping that beautiful place (Gen. 2:15-17). The enemy, knowing he was responsible for its care and administration, avoided him, speaking directly to his wife. Yet, as far as we can find in Scripture, God gave no warning or instructions to Eve concerning the Garden that was all delivered to her husband. Thus the wily enemy immediately begins his evil work by first questioning and then planting doubts in Adam's wife's mind.

Eve, rather than asking her husband's advice (or better yet, allowing him to reply since he was the responsible one), took it upon herself to answer the serpent (she became a teacher) and was quickly fooled into doubting God's goodness. The treasures of life and innocence were stolen from her by what appeared so inviting and desirable, yet led to death.

But the worst failure was Adam’s. Where was he when Eve was being tempted? Perhaps standing right by her? Yet he did nothing to protect save his beloved companion from falling prey to the evil suggestions of the enemy. Oh! If Adam had only loved his wife enough to save her from such awful danger!

In Ephesians 5:23 we read, “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” Adam, who had said of Eve, “this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,” did not “save” his body from her greatest danger. Yet he had received God’s word enough to have defeated Satan then, even as the Lord later used it to defeat the devil in the wilderness (Luke 4).

May God stir up us husbands to so love our wives that we will protect them from what appears inviting, yet is really the work of the enemy that angel of light who seeks to destroy the beautiful garden of our marriages. Husbands, do we love our wives enough to daily bear the responsibility of being their “saviour”—in love, keeping them from what ultimately will produce harm and sorrow?

“Husbands, love your wives” (Eph. 5:25).

Ed.

St. Louis Conference: 2001, Some Rivers and Gardens

Address—D. Nicolet

Good afternoon with #256. Hymn #256 Praise the Savior. Ye who know him who can tell? How much we owe Him gladly. Let us render to him all we have and are Him. #256 Praise the Savior. Trust in his face forever. He is able to change you. Never. Never. Saw her God inside of her Lord. What I have on my heart this afternoon, trust is from the Lord. Is through in a way kind of continue with the two subjects that have been presented in the addresses friends? And connecting rods. But I'm going to present it by looking at two other objects in the word of God with the Lord's help, and perhaps with the Lord's help will be able to. Bring them together like to look a little bit at some rivers and. A gardener, so in the word of God. We'll start in Genesis. Chapter. 2. Genesis Chapter 2. And I'd like to start reading. But we'll start in verse 7. And the Lord God. Formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils. The breath of life and man became a living soul, and the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden. And there he put the man whom he had formed, and out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads. The name of the first is Python, that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah. Where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good, there is delium and Onyx stone, and the name of the second river is Guyhan. The same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. The name of the third river is hitacle, that is it which goeth toward the east. Of Assyria. The 4th river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden. Of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. I'd like to read that verse in Mr. Darby's translation.

I think it's quite striking. And Jehovah Elohim took man and put him into the Garden of Eden, to till it and to guard it. Now I'd like you to turn with me to. The Gospel of John. And we'll start with, umm. Believe it's Chapter 7. Yes, John, Chapter 7. Verse 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying if any man thirst. Is there anyone here today who's thirsty? Like us to ask our hearts before we go on. In reality, be real and ask yourself privately before God who knows the thoughts of your heart. Are you thirsty this afternoon? Have you been trying the waters? The springs? That song we sing, I thirsted. And tried the barren springs. They mocked me. Have you been trying the things that the world has presented to you? Well, sources of refreshment. And found that you're still thirsty. The Lord Jesus is saying something to you this afternoon. If anyone is thirsty, if you're thirsty, if you can honestly say Lord, it's true. I've accepted you as my savior. Perhaps there's someone here who hasn't. Well, the way to quench your thirst is to simply tell the Lord Jesus that you want. Him as your personal savior. But perhaps you've done that. And you find that you're still thirsty. Why isn't he supposed to satisfy? Come to these meetings and we hear about things and we see brethren sitting with smiles on their faces and talking about things they enjoy about and enjoy that they've meditated on and they seem to be so happy. How come? Am I still thirsty? What's wrong? Well, the problem, dear friend, isn't beloved brothers and sisters. The problem isn't the Lord Jesus. The problem isn't his precious word. The problem isn't the water he has, whatever the problem is, and I don't know what the problem is. I don't know why you might be thirsty, but I know whoever it is, it's I don't want to say this lovingly. It's your problem. There's something wrong with you, something you've missed, something you've overlooked. Something that somehow is keeping those living waters that the Lord Jesus has promised. Jesus is God the Creator. Would he make a promise that he didn't intend to keep? Let God be true and every man a liar. Would he ever promise anything that he wouldn't keep? He says here, If any man thirst, or we could say if anyone thirst, are you thirsty this afternoon? Well, here's a here's a solution for it. And that solution is not the latest professional football game, because if the team you want to win loses, you're still going to be thirsty. And you are also already know if the team you want to win wins, you're still going to be thirsty. No matter what happens in this world, you're going to be thirsty if you're drinking from this world. So here's the solution, and it's the only solution. If any man thirst, let him come unto me. Where are you going this afternoon? In your heart, where are you looking this afternoon to be satisfied? Where are you looking to have your thirst quenched? I can't tell you how the Lord Jesus will do that. Because I don't know you, and I don't know your heart and you don't know mine. And I don't know the needs of your heart and you don't know the needs of my heart. But if you're thirsty this afternoon, I do know this. The only one who can never lie because he's light and he's love is saying come.

An open invitation come come to me. And drink. Drink. What does that mean? That means that you take. What he gives, and I'm going to suggest it will come through the word of God. And you make it your own. We talked a lot about faith these last couple of days. And faith will open this book, which is a well of living water and the only one to be found in this world, and will take what's in it and read it and say that's for me. And I want to suggest that's at least one aspect of drinking. To say Lord, I am thirsty. I am not really fully satisfied. I'm searching, I'm looking. Be honest with yourself and I'm still not satisfied, Lord. But you said to come and drink. And out he that believeth on me, verse 38. That's part of drinking to believe that the Lord Jesus is. That he means what he says. That he is the one and only source of refreshment, of eternal life, of joy, of happiness. He that believeth on me. What are you believing on this afternoon? Some people, perhaps, and I am not finding fault with any of these things in themselves, but if they're the thing you're believing on, I would find a lot of fault with them. Some people believe on the stock market, and they've had a rough few months recently. Some people believe in their education. And the unemployment rate in the United States is the highest it's been for years. Some people believe in their strength. And I just recently read when

I was getting into my e-mail, a headline of that some young man, A huge giant of a man, 330 lbs, powerful man, 6 feet, I don't know how many inches tall who played in a professional sport that needed supreme strength to compete in. Was getting ready for this season to compete in that sport. He had won honors and awards. And in a few hours, he was dead. Of heat stroke. Are you trusting in your strength? It's going to go away. And no matter how strong you are, I'll guarantee you somewhere in the world there's somebody that's stronger. So what are you? Trusting in. He that believeth on me. What are you believing in? What does the world believe in? It has everything that it believes in, all sorts of things. It's believing in coalitions today. To bring peace, it's believing in military might to bring vengeance and justice. And I do not in any way denigrate the powers that be, nor the military that has made it possible for us to sit here and be so comfortable. And we should speak very carefully about those things. And we certainly should spend some time as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, praying especially for those dear young men and women who are involved in this awful conflict. But is that what you're believing on? Are you believing on the security at the airports to keep you safe? Are you believing in the FBI that it's going to find all the perpetrators of wickedness? We could go on, couldn't we? What are you believing on? If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink he that believeth on me. The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the one, as we have heard, who knew all about you, who knows all about you, and knowing everything there is to know about you, loves you with an infinite love, and has one desire and one desire only. And that is that you might have His joy fulfilled in your heart and life. Let him come on to me and drink he that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said. Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Well, we talked about a garden that a river flowed into. God created that world, and then there was a place in that world called Eden, and in that place he created a garden. It must have been an incredibly beautiful garden. And it's so delighted his heart, because that's what Eden means, I believe, is delight or pleasure, that he sent a river of his blessing into that garden.

And from that garden, that blessing flowed out in rivers. I will say in terms of our scripture of living water, four more rivers, a universal blessing to the lands around. And now we've come to the Lord Jesus himself who says, if you're thirsty, come to me and out of you, not out of a garden, but out of you will flow rivers of living water. You know something was broken if I can use. Brother Henry's illusion, his illustration from yesterday. There was a connecting rod that got broken. There was a beautiful garden and everything was perfect. And he asked man to do something, he said. I'm putting you here, Adam. I want you to till the ground. I want you to take care of it so it can produce. And I want you to guard it and keep that which would destroy it out. And the very first verse of chapter 3 tells us that he didn't guard it. Because into that garden somehow came the serpent, the arch enemy. Of God and of man. Did he find his way into that garden, into that beautiful place? Well, I'm not going to push this, but I'm going to suggest that however he found his way in there in the guise of this most beautiful creature shining, glorious, innocent, harmless looking creature. The way he found his way in there is because Adam wasn't guarding as he was supposed to do. He didn't keep that garden shut and walled up. To keep the enemy out. And because of that the connecting rod was broken because before long. Man started disbelieving. He listened to the enemy instead of the Creator. He listened to the one who wanted to destroy instead of the one who gave the Garden. And the connecting rod was broken. And what's the connecting rod? The connecting rod is that God? I may I say this reverently, but I believe that it was not only for the heart of man to enjoy that God put that garden there. Do you know what I think he did? Even more than that, I think he put that guard in there, that he might have something his heart wanted, fellowship with his creature. You know, it says of Adam that he couldn't find anything among the beautiful animal creation that satisfied him. And God knew that. And God said, it's not good for man to be alone. I'm going to make a helpmate for him. And he did, may I say reverently that God could not find that which satisfied his heart in all that beautiful creation apart from man. And so he made a garden. And he was so pleased with that garden that his river of blessing flowed into it. The delight that he had in that garden flowed into it. And he wanted in that garden a place where he could come. And he could enjoy fellowship with his creature man, enjoy thoughts, common thoughts with him, come to him in the cool of the day, and walk with him in that beautiful garden that was watered with that river and that flowed out universally, and blessing to all the land around. And Adam sinned, Adam and Eve, and they disbelieved that God, my God, your God, they disbelieved him. And that connecting rod was broken, and the connecting rod was the joy that God could have. In communion and fellowship with his creature man, he could no longer have it, and he drives the man out of the garden. How sad. Now I want to we'll come back to this, but I want to go on now and I want to look at. A couple other well known passages in John and then we'll turn to one other in Revelation before we continue to turn to. John chapter. 15. We'll just read these verses and we'll comment on them in a little bit. But I'd like to put these into our thoughts as we're talking, Lord Jesus speaking. Very familiar verse, verse 13 of John 15. Greater love hath no man than this. That a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends. I just want to stop there. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends. You see, Dear Believer, in the application I'm making, a connecting rod has been broken because of sin. And man can no longer you and I can no longer by nature enjoy the communion and fellowship and joy of walking with our God, apart from one being a friend of ours. May I say it that way, and laying down his life to restore a far more glorious connecting rod. And I want to tell you, it certainly is coated with silver, the redemption work, the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross, that you and I might be brought back into connection with God. And enjoy communion and fellowship with God. So that this connecting rod has been now re established through the work of Christ at the cross. And he calls you dear friend, if you know him as savior, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, trusting in His blood to wash your sins away, He calls you his friends. He's laid down his life for you, and he calls you. He calls me friends. What a wonderful thing. What a wonderful. Joy to see that this that was lost to man because of sin in the garden. Has been restored in a far more glorious way. And now we'll turn to Revelation and see what is going to replace that garden. Turn to Revelation. Chapter 22. Revelation Chapter 22. There's some wonderful descriptions that are given here. You and I, who know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, we are in a coming day, perhaps very soon now. Going to see the full glory and beauty and understand it in a way that we never could understand it as mere men in this world of this scene that's described. But it says here in verse one of chapter 22 of Revelation, he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal. Proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and in the midst, in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river was there the tree of life. It's wonderful, you know, in the garden. That tree of life was in the midst of the garden. It's not my intent to ponder it today, but I don't understand why. If Adam and Eve, maybe it's because of their innocence and they didn't realize the incredible importance of it. But in the day that we live in sickness and death and sorrow and all that's going on, I just wonder over and over again, why didn't Adam as soon as he heard about that tree of life that was in the midst of the garden of which God said you can freely eat of that, that's one of the trees of the garden. You can freely. Why didn't you run straight for that tree? And get the fruit and take a big bite. The Tree of life, it was open to him. There was a tree of the knowledge of good and evil there in that garden. And he got it mixed up. And she said to the serpent, trying to answer. The tree that's in the midst of the garden. We're not to eat of it nor touch it. How can you till a garden if you can't touch what's in it? And what was in the midst of the garden? I'm going to suggest, if you read it carefully, and I think the original Hebrew supports it, that the tree that's being referred to as the tree of life that's in the midst of the garden. And it doesn't say where the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was. It's just in the garden. And I want to suggest to you that had they believed God and acted on the blessing he wanted them to have, they would have run straight for that tree of life. And eaten the fruit, and they didn't. And the Lord has a connecting rod broken.

Something is taken away from him. He can't have communion and fellowship that he wants with you. Dear friend, beloved brother, sister, young, old, in this room today. He wants, he values. He looks for communion and fellowship with you and with me. Now if President Bush were in the city of Saint Louis. I'm pretty sure at least one person in this room would not be invited to see him because he would have no need of Maine. I'm not important, and perhaps this whole room is filled with people that he really would have no need of having, except if it were voting time.

He wouldn't have any specific need of having you come and sit down and talk with him. It wouldn't mean anything to him. But this is the creator God of the universe, the one who hung the sun and the moon and the stars with a word of his power, who brought everything that you can see into being. And he not only has time for you, he desires your company. He's not saying. Well, if you. I'm pretty busy this afternoon, but I'll try to work in between 4:00 and 5:00. He's saying come and drink. I want to walk with you because a connecting rod was broken in Eden. And I can't enjoy fellowship on that basis anymore. And so I died on the cross. So that I could have you. You would come to me and drink, and I could give you such joy and blessing that rivers would flow out of you because they can't flow out of the garden anymore. Rivers of living water. But in this new creation, in this new, in this new city. It talks about a river, that the Tree of Life is on either side of the river. You don't have to go to the midst of the garden. Wherever you're standing, there's the Tree of Life. I don't understand that. But I know it's fully, perfectly forever available for you and for me. And we're going to enjoy it. But then it says this. There shall be no more curse. Well, we could go on with that, but I just want to tell you. That a garden, because of sin was lost. And I say reverently to God, first of all, the connecting rod was broken. And through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, he's going to bring a place much more beautiful than that garden. And it's going to have a river in it, and it's going to have the tree of life in it, and it's going to have so much more in it, so much greater blessing than would have ever been realized had Adam and Eve never sinned. So much more wonderful joy and blessing for you and me. And I want to tell you that bringing you and me there, those who were born in sin, those who practiced sin, those who, if we were to refer to ourselves as trees, would have to say the root is bad and the fruit is bad. The root, my nature is born in sin. I am not fit. For the presence of God, I cannot stand in his presence because of my nature. And I prove it because of what I do, what I say, what I think. I bear fruit that is obnoxious to God every bit, and more obnoxious than the fruit that Cain brought to him to seek to worship him. And so I want to submit that the most wonderful, if I can say it this way, friend. That you could ever have has provided the way to bring you into this scene in Revelation 22. You know, in Hebrews 11, it says they look for a city whose builder and maker is God. They look for a city which have foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Are you looking for that city or are you looking for a garden? Here, the 11 young people I'm going to finish up this afternoon by making some specific references that I want specially to talk to you about. You can try to find a garden here. You can try to make a garden here. In this world, and the world has its rivers, there's the abandoned and the far par rivers. That are better than the River Jordan for healing. And those rivers refresh this world. But I want to tell you what that river means to you as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want you to listen carefully to this. It means the river. It means the place, the source, where Satan intends to cast you, that you might die even as he wanted to cast the baby Moses. There was a river in Egypt. And that river meant life to those in Egypt, but it meant death to the people of God, to those little babies. And there's a river that refreshes this world, which man is ever trying to make into a garden. And that river means death to you. The link the connecting rod has been broken because of sin. And if you're going to try to find a garden in this world and use the world's source of refreshment to make that garden bloom, I want to tell you, beloved young people, you're going to have nothing but agony and dissatisfaction and unhappiness for the rest of your life. It's not a matter of what the brethren teach or what do I have to go to meeting or this or that. It's a matter of your happiness and who is going to be the source of it, this world that spit in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Or your savior Jesus Christ. Which one is going to give you the satisfaction you're looking for? You're not wrong to look for satisfaction. We all want that and we're not denied that the Lord wants us to have. That's why he said come on to me and drink. He wants you to be happy. But are you trying to build a world to find your happiness, a garden rather to find your happiness here. And you're trying to use the methods and the principles that the world that spit in my. To spit in the blessed face of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are those the principles that you're going to pick up and use to find happiness now that you've bought, belonged to Him, and been washed in His precious blood? You're going to pick up with a Waze and the habits of a world that that thought that the best they could give the Son of God the Creator was a cross, and then sit down and laugh at Him and be entertained by His death? You know, no one was entertained by the Twin Towers. No one sat there and was entertained by that sight. Many people have visited it. I have yet to hear. Perhaps there were some hardened fools that thought it was a funny thing, but I have yet to hear of any who have visited that and thought that was an entertaining thing. I have yet to see a photograph of people watching. There are photographs of people caught as they watch that Twin Towers collapse. They're not laughing, they're screaming in horror. That the heart of man could sit and laugh and be entertained. By these by the crucifixion agony of the Son of God. Is that the world you're looking at to find satisfaction? Is that where you're going to build a garden? Turn with me quickly to Song of Solomon. There. This book never ceases to amaze me, and it's well, I guess I would have to say every book in the word of God. I just feel like a. Fish out of water. I guess the word is so incredible in its depth, but it's such a beautiful book. I just want to make a simple application. I want you to think now of the bridegroom speaking to the one that he loves, that he's going to make one with himself. In Chapter 4 of Song of Solomon, here's what he says to her. And I would like you to think of these words in this way as I read them. Allow your thoughts to think of the Lord Jesus saying these words to you this afternoon. If you know him as your personal savior, allow him to use these very words to speak to your heart this afternoon. Verse 9 Thou hast ravaged my heart, My sister, my spouse. Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse, How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thy ointments than all spices? You know, this morning we had a most precious time. Thinking about the love of Christ for us and we could have turned to the first chapter, the Song of Solomon. And early in that first chapter it says we will remember thy love more than wine. And I think earlier it says Thy love is better than wine. And then a little later it says we will remember thy love more than wine. That's the bride speaking to the bridegroom. That's what we did this morning, you might say. We said, Lord Jesus, we're remembering thy love. And it's better than every joy this earth can afford. But that's not the end of the story. There's His side of it, and his side of it is Your love to me is much better than wine. No matter how we value his love for us, never forget how infinitely more He values those little displays of your love and mind for himself. You've ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse.

What words are those? The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God in type, if I may say it that way, speaking to you and to me, you've ravished my heart. Your love for me is much better than wine. And then he goes on and I went to read down in verse 12. Now a garden enclosed. He's still speaking. A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse. A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. My plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits. Campfire with spikenard. Spiked dirt and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes with all the chief spices. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon. I don't have the time, and more than that, I don't

have the ability to give any kind of an exposition on the beautiful meanings that must no doubt be involved in this description. But I do want you to know something. This is what the Lord Jesus sees in you if you know him as savior. What he could no longer enjoy, may I say reverently, reverently in Eden, because the connecting rod was broken. And he says he looks at you and you and you and you and each one of us here who know him as savior. And he says, you've ravished my heart. You have a garden that I was denied in Eden, and it's a beautiful garden. And it's full of things that delight my heart. And I want to come into that garden and I want to enjoy that garden. I want to have communion and fellowship with you. I have restored the connecting rod. I've died on the cross. I said this before. It's been covered with silver, the redemption found in Christ. You know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold received by tradition from the vain conversation of your Father's, but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without spot and without blemish. Oh, what beautiful silver on this connecting rod. And he says, now I have a garden. And that garden is so precious, beloved young people hear me. He says that garden is enclosed. It's not open to the world. I don't want the world to come in and defile it. It's enclosed, and the springs of water, the refreshment that is in that garden, are shut up from the world because if they're uncovered, they're going to get defiled. You sometimes hear about how legal brethren are. We'll try this instead. Try thinking this, that you are so precious to the heart of Christ and he is so jealous for your affection that he doesn't want one spot from this world to defile the garden that he wants to come into and enjoy in your company and in your presence. And so he says, I want a really strong wall built around that garden because it's not open to the world. He's going to do something that the first Adam didn't do. The first Adam was going was supposed to till and guard the garden, and the Lord Jesus says, as it were, he didn't and the enemy got in. But I'm the second, I'm the last Adam, the 2nd man, and I'm going to guard this garden. I'm going to put a wall around it and guard it. So that the world can't come in and defile it. We fail. And I suppose there are aspects we don't have time to go into as to our position in our, as some say, our standing in our state here. And maybe this is more the aspect of our standing, but it ought to be our our desire for our state too, that practically daily we enjoy this, the realization that so precious am I. Is that possible if you knew me? If you could. Make any noise at all? You'd laugh to think that I would say I'm so precious. To the heart of Christ, that he has enclosed me as a garden full of delights. But that's what he's done for each one of us. Well. I wanted to talk about those four rivers for the young people I'm going to stop. They want to close now, but let me just say this in very quick summary and then I'll leave it to you to study it out.

If any man thirst, let him come on to me and drink. He that believeth on me as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. What's flowing out of your life? To those around today, we have heard some solemn gospel messages. And it's very clear that this world is well aware whether it wants to be or not. That something is badly amiss. And it has some great needs that it can't fulfill. Do you know you can fulfill those in that sense, if out of your life is flowing rivers of living water, the garden and clothes that he dwells in, which he was denied in Eden, that had four gardens and four rivers flowing out of it. Those four, four rivers, if I can say it this way, beloved young people, dear brethren, those four rivers can flow out of our lives now. So the rivers that would refresh the world don't need to be shut up. Now I, as I said, I'm going to close, but I'm going to read the verse I believe in the New Testament that has, as our brother said yesterday, the doctrine of this. And what, at least in the application I'm making answers to those four rivers 3:00. Thank you. So I can go a little longer. I'd like you to turn with me to 1St Corinthians. First Corinthians chapter One. And I'd like to suggest that these are the four rivers that the Lord as a connecting rod now. To this world would like to see flowing out of the garden that he has made in each of our lives. Verse 30. But of him, that's God, are ye in Christ Jesus, who from God that could read is made unto us Wisdom river one, Righteousness river 2 Sanctification river three, and redemption river 4. What do I mean by that? No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God or ransom for him. How can I be used in redemption? Oh, are you redeemed in the precious blood of Christ? Well, let that river flow. Let that be one of the rivers that's flowing out of the garden. The message of the joy and the satisfaction of redemption. And not only what it means to be saved, to know him as your personal savior, but the fact that this isn't the end. You know, there are so many people in this world today who This is the end. This is it. This is as good as it gets. And it's not very good. It starts out by wisdom we speak. I'm sorry, but of him are ye in Christ Jesus? I'm going to read that in the New translation. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus who has been made to us wisdom from God, two kinds of wisdom in this world. I want to speak. I appreciate what I think was Brother Jim talked about that we we not overuse or or overemphasize these things that that happened on September 11Th. I think that's a very important thing to remember. But you know, men are desperately seeking for wisdom right now, for a lot of things. To make this world a peaceful place, free of terrorists and on and on and on, free of certain diseases. I thank God for wisdom. We're enjoying a pretty wonderful place because of a lot of man's ingenuity and wisdom that God by his grace has allowed man to have. And we shouldn't look down on that. But that's not the river of wisdom that needs to flow out of your garden and mine. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Is that river flowing out of your life, beloved young people? Is your life reflecting? A walk that is walked in the fear of God, that is, walked in respect to what God thinks. That first and foremost takes into account what your Creator Savior. Desires. It's not fair to be scared of him. It's fear to do anything that would displease or dishonor him, or to forget to take him into my every thought and action. I don't need to fear one who has already given me peace. Let me turn quickly to that, because I want to tell you, I I to this day, I have a problem with this. This is something Satan really smacks me with, I suppose. He finds our weaknesses, each one of us, and he he knows how to, in each case, work on our weaknesses. One of my many, many is a lot of fear.

Romans 5 I think this was read earlier today. I'm going to misread the first verse because this is how I always think about it instead of just reading God's word. Verse one of chapter 5 being misread now, therefore being justified by faith. We feel peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm always forever wanting to feel something. That's not the point. The Lord Jesus has been the connecting rod at the cross and I've accepted him as a savior and he says it's not a matter of feelings. You have it. Now I admit there's a whole side of this as to enjoyment that is connected with my walk. But I don't feel peace with God. It was up to my feelings. I wouldn't be up here. I wouldn't. I would hide from you, brother. If my salvation and my Christian life and my blessings were based on my feelings, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God. Is your life showing this? Is the wisdom the fear of God? That's why I say that verse about peace. And it's not the thought of fear as being scared of God, scared of what he's going to do to me or how he's going to get me. I'm real good at that, I'm afraid. But to let my life be a river that flows out. To a land. That is full of treasures. And this river, if I understand right the the meaning of the name is overflowing or a flood over flooding water. I don't want to get imaginary or or or so on in my thoughts, but I just thought of it this way. The world has its treasures of gold and jewels and things that it treasures. But the river of the fear of God flowing out of your life and mine can flood it. So that those can see there's someone who isn't living their life in the fear of gold. Or the fear of riches or wealth. Or fame. Will they get it or will they lose it? There's one who's living in the fear of God. Well, we don't. I just want to suggest that each of those rivers answers to one of these. The next one is righteousness. I could never ever be or find righteousness in myself, or have a basis to stand before God on my righteousness. There is none. Righteous. No, not one. That's it. Final. There are no arguing with God. You may want to, but it's not going to work. God has already said there's none. Righteous. No, not one. All of man's righteousnesses are as filthy rags. That doesn't. That even takes in the organizations that are collecting money for the victims of 911. If it's being done as a way to get into the good graces of God and merit God's favor, God says it's filthy rags. It doesn't count. So is there a river flowing out of your life that shows that Christ is my righteousness? That I'm

righteous in him? That He's given me that robe of righteousness? You can take that on and on, dear young person. Have you gone to the Lord Jesus, thirsty and drunk, and the river of wisdom and the river of righteousness and the river of sanctification, holiness, separation? Why? Because you have to be a do gooder. Because you can't do this. You can't do that. You can't think this. You can't go there. No, because you've been satisfied and you don't need those things. They're not going to supply, you know what they what this world, it doesn't look like a famine in our land. This world is in such a moral famine. You know what they ate in the history of Israel when the famine really got bad? It says that an *** has had a donkey's head sold for a vast quantity of silver and a little measure of doves done sold for a big quantity of silver too. And you know what?

That's what's important in this world today, Phil, and foolishness. What is it that Hollywood, movies, entertainment. What do they dwell on? What do they give you to feed on filth, moral corruption and foolishness. And people are hungry for it because it's a horrible famine and they pay a great price for it. These movie stars, these entertainment figures, they're incredibly wealthy people. How have they made their wealth? By providing you a donkey's head and a cab of calves done of pigeons dung. That's how they've gotten so wealthy. Are you feeding on that, or is a river flowing out of you to refresh your world? But that's all it has to feed on, and it's coming from a separated holy life. Does that mean you can't enjoy anything? Has nothing to do with that at all. It means that you will, first of all, walk in enjoyment with your savior God. And that you will keep yourself by His strength. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. You'll keep yourself through His strength from those things that bring corruption and defilement and filth into your life. And you'll be sanctified and redemption. The last river, you know I want to say. I want to say it very carefully, because I want to tell you I consider myself a worse failure than you're ever, than anyone here will ever know when it comes to. Preaching the gospel or giving the gospel to others. God grant that we be 100 times more faithful and giving out and living the gospel before those around us, but that's the last thing here in this list. That's the last of the rivers mentioned. And if you want to tie it in with a little extra study you'll find it's also has no characteristics mentioned in Genesis. It just says the river Euphrates. So I'm I'm telling you then by saying this that if you want to study this, you can connect. Each of these four things with those four rivers in the order that they're mentioned, and then see what the spirit of God gives you from that. But I just want to tell you that it doesn't do a whole lot of good for you to talk about knowing Christ, that you're as your savior if you haven't walked in the fear of God, in the wisdom of His Word, in a sense of your righteous standing through the work of Christ, and as separate from all the filth and foolishness in this world. If you haven't lived and walked like that, I want to say carefully, what good does it do then to tell someone else about Jesus? What good did he do for you if there's no change in your life? I want to be very careful. I mean this very reverently. But what use is it to talk about something that I don't put to use myself? Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I want to close with the story because Bob said I could go to three. I. Some of you probably have heard this or read it, but I want to tell you how simple it can be to be that garden with waters flowing out of it. That the Lord Jesus can have his place, that he was denied in the Garden of Eden. That now you and I can give that to him and the waters can flow out to others who are in need. I want to tell you how simple it is. This is a true story. I don't know if the facts are accurate. I know the event happened. We'll call her Susie because I don't know what her name was. A six year old girl. Who, when she was three, had a stroke and was partially paralyzed. When she was 5, her parents were killed in an auto accident and she was orphaned. When she was six, she started going blind and they thought that she probably had a brain tumor. And they took her into the hospital to give her. I don't know, Ralph. I guess you know what it was an MRI or something like that, some kind of a test, a scan to pick out this tumor that was causing this blindness. And here's this paralyzed little girl orphan now going blind. And they they are on a busy schedule in the room testing the testing room. And so they tell her, Susie, you must remember to lay very still when we put you in the tube and we do the scan. Don't move, don't talk, just be very still. And so they slide her into the tube and they close the door and as they begin the scan immediately the image becomes blurred. And they realize that Susie is whispering or talking or doing something. She's moving. So they stop and they're getting a little frustrated. They've got a heavy schedule of a lot of tests to run that day, and they pull her out and they say, Susie, remember what we said. You must be quiet. You can't move, You can't say anything because that'll make the image blurry. And they put her back in, slide her into the tube, and they start to scan, and they can hear some mumbling. And sure enough, the image starts blurring.

And this time rather frustrated the head radiologist or whoever it was doing this as they got Suzy I, said Susie. We said no talking. You've got to be quiet. You can't move. No talking. And Susie and her partially paralyzed condition, twisted words, said I wasn't talking. Susie, you were talking. No, I wasn't talking. I was singing. Susie, you were you were singing. What were you singing? I was singing Jesus loves me. I always sing Jesus loves me when I'm happy. Got a river like that flowing out of your life? There's a world that needs to be happy. And you're a garden that's making the Lord Jesus happy because of what he did on the cross. How about letting those rivers flow now? Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out crater. Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends. Now he says, come and drink and let the waters flow. But you got a drink first.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 05

“Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created” (Gen. 5:2).

Adam’s wife was given three names. In Genesis 2:23 when God first brought her to him, Adam said, “She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Then in Genesis 3:20, after they had sinned, Adam called “his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.” But God Himself gives her the third name Adam. From these names we learn important principles concerning marriage.

God’s Order

In calling her woman, Adam recognized that God had provided a special, unique companion for him—one who was of him and who also completed him. The woman was the perfect counterpart, perfectly suited to the man, and together they formed one flesh in God’s sight: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24).

The Western world, having cast off the light and wisdom of God’s Word, has corrupted this divinely ordained union between the man and the woman, accepting and promoting the horrible and depraved abomination mentioned in Leviticus 20:13 and Romans 1:27 as being an acceptable alternative lifestyle union. Make no mistake such horrible corruption of God’s union of man and woman in marriage results in the most awful and solemn consequences.

How happy when both husband and wife can practically recognize in each other that they have been specially fitted by God to compliment and support their spouse, that they might walk together as one. When this is so, each will be able to bring to their marriage that which gives unity and joy.

Faith

In calling her Eve, Adam recognized their sin had brought in the terrible consequence of death. But acting in wonderful faith, trusting the goodness and mercy of God to provide a coming redeemer (Gen. 3:15) from the seed of his wife (even as He had provided garments for their covering), he gives her a name which means life.

Happy marriages will also find both partners recognizing and confessing personal failures, while trusting Him in faith to preserve their union in joy.

Responsibility

After this God gives Eve one name Adam. In this we see a beautiful picture of the Christ (1 Cor. 12:12 JnD “even as the body is one... so also is the Christ”). Believers are not only children of God, but they are part of the Christ. Just as He is Head, taking responsibility for the body’s care and protection, so husbands are to do the same for their body their wife. They were not called Eve. Adam bore responsibility to God for headship and care in their union. All happy marriages must have a husband who bears headship and responsibility in both spiritual and natural realms. “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 02

“Jehovah Elohim took Man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to till it and to guard it” (Gen. 2:15 JND).

For his fourteenth birthday, we bought a bike for our oldest son. He had looked at many models and brands before finding just what he wanted: a 12-speed, silver French-built racer. He bore sole responsibility for its care and treatment. He promised to be diligent. Twenty-two years later the bike is still in excellent shape and has increased in value as a collector’s item.

Adam was given something of far greater value—the beautiful garden of Eden (meaning pleasure), planned and created by God. There he was to live in endless rest and delight, enjoying its beauty and fruit while experiencing the joy of fellowship with God.

God made him responsible for two things keep it in order (till it) and keep it from harm (guard it). Sadly, Adam failed in his responsibility, sinning against God and losing the privilege of dwelling there.

He evidently did not guard Eden, for the serpent gained entrance into its pristine sphere. Perhaps Satan, the highest of God’s created beings (though fallen; see Ezek. 28:12-19), disguised himself as “an angel of light” and thus fooled Eve. Maybe Adam felt no need to guard against anything so beautiful and harmless as the serpent must have appeared. But what awful sorrow has resulted from his failure and sin!

This has a solemn voice of warning to husbands and wives regarding the sacred garden of marriage. How easily those things which may appear innocent, beautiful and harmless (such as habits, recreations and personal interests) are allowed to enter and dominate marriages. If not controlled, they quickly steal the heart’s affections that belong only to the spouse!

Marriage pictures the union between Christ and His church (Eph. 5), and the enemy tirelessly seeks to gain entrance to spoil that beautiful institution of God. Notice how the bridegroom refers to his beloved bride in the Song of Songs: “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse” (ch. 4:12 JnD). She was his garden of delight, protected (enclosed) from all that might spoil the love and delight he had found in her.

Also, happy marriages, like healthy gardens, need constant tilling. Before marriage, two in love have no difficulty finding ways little and big to bring delight to their partner. Sadly, after marriage, couples too often forget that tilling of the heart’s affections requires continual daily effort a labor of love. Romance should never stop once marriage has begun!

Both partners (not just one) must till and guard against anything that takes the heart away from their spouse. Satan can easily destroy marriages where romance and love are no longer diligently tilled.

This visually oriented world quickly captures the sight (as it did with Lot; Gen. 13:10), ultimately stealing the heart’s affections (as Absalom did in 2 Samuel 15:6) from the one to whom love until death do us part has been pledged. Husbands and wives! We’re responsible before God to diligently guard and till our wonderful garden of marriage. May God stir us up! “Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes” (Song of Sol. 4:9).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 1998, Editorial: Thankfulness

“And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold” (Gen. 24:22).

A dear brother recently asked what might be gleaned for “our learning” (Rom. 15:4) from this verse found in the beautiful story of Rebekah, the bride of Isaac. We feel that there is much practical instruction contained in it instruction particularly suitable for the “perilous times” in which we live—times when “the love of many shall wax cold.”

The servant was observing a normal custom of the people of Ur of the Chaldees when he placed the “earring” (probably a nose jewel) and the two “gold bracelets” on Rebekah. Such gifts were an acceptable expression of thanks for kindnesses or services rendered to another.

But more importantly, this verse shows the value that God places on His children displaying a thankful spirit not only thankfulness to Him for all the grace and blessing He has bestowed (though that is the foundation of it), but a thankful spirit as the normal tenor of life in those called Christians.

All too often, sad to say, believers often forget to say “thank you” to others who have served them in some way. Of course, being thankful does not mean always giving a gift (as the servant gave to Rebekah). A heartfelt “thank you” so pleasing to our Father is the moral equivalent of the earring and bracelets that Rebekah received.

I was quite a young boy when I learned the following poem: There are five little words I’d have you to know; They are “pardon me,” “thank you” and “please.” Oh, use them quite often wherever you go; There are few words more useful than these.

Good advice for all and well worth putting into practice!

We see many examples of thankfulness throughout the Word of God. Elisha gave a wonderful thank-you to the Shunammite (2 Kings 4:11-17). The beloved Apostle Paul thanked those who helped him, had a thankful spirit, and thanked God for all things, while teaching us to do the same (Rom. 16:4; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 5:4; 1 Thess. 5:18).

Another lesson contained in our verse is found in the material of which the gifts given to Rebekah were made: gold (which speaks of purity). There was nothing unseemly in such a gift or in the way it was given. It was an appropriate expression of thanks, both for the giver and the receiver.

The gift was not calculated to gain something from Rebekah. It did not pressure her to compromise her purity or her family honor. The flesh is ever ready to take advantage of every situation even of the way in which a thank-you is expressed. Let us see that “gold” always characterizes our thank-yous.

The servant did not, however, give the gift to her until the “camels had done drinking.” This taught Rebekah a valuable lesson about the God of Abraham one who was loving and generous, but who also valued faithfulness. Thank-yous are an important part of our testimony for the Lord Jesus.

Later, when the servant sought to claim Rebekah as a bride for Isaac, he presented to her “silver... gold... raiment, and... precious things” (vs. 53). When she was serving, her head (earrings) and her hands (bracelets) were involved and rewarded. But when the servant would win her as a bride for his master’s son, he must engage the affections of her heart. These gifts were not given as a reward for service or a bribe to buy her love, for real love can never be bought. (See 2 Samuel 15:6.) It must be won.

These gifts speak of the glorious Person (gold) and work (silver) of the One to whom we are to become united as His beloved bride. Our lives ought to be characterized (raiment) by what is pleasing to Him. Though He has redeemed us with His own precious blood, He does not buy our affection. He, who is worthy of all, seeks to win our love, while He faithfully rewards our service.

As we daily thank Him for all His goodness and ways with us, let us also learn to be thankful to all men. Let’s ask: If saying “thank you” was a crime, would there be enough evidence to convict me?

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 01

Ed. Note: This article marks the first of what is intended to be a series of short meditations on marriage. Beginning with Genesis 1, Lord willing, we hope to glean handfuls from God’s Word that will cause joy and help preserve the blessed, divinely appointed marriage institution the lovely picture of Christ and the church so attacked of the enemy. We trust that our God may be pleased to bless these simple thoughts.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

During the time I taught computer graphics in college, many of my students were older, having been laid off from work. These “forty somethings,” with families to raise and bills to pay, had a “no nonsense” approach to life. Needing computer skills to be employable, they intently and nervously watched as the competencies they had to master were explained and demonstrated. In order to ease their tension, I often ended my lectures saying, “Have a wonderful day!” With that, anxious frowning faces relaxed as the room filled with the rhythmic tapping sounds of computer keyboards.

God desires that our marriages experience a “wonderful day” every day. He created this blessed union for mankind’s joy and comfort. (“It is not good that the man should be alone.”) But with sin marring everything, how can such marriage joy be sustained? The answer is found at Calvary, where God gave His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we might, now and forever, enjoy a “wonderful day.” Married couples who follow this divine pattern in spirit by “giving” to each other will indeed enjoy a “wonderful day,” each day of their lives.

The key for how to give is contained in the first words of the Bible: “In the beginning God.”

In the beginning, each day, together give God praise and worship through prayer and reading.

In the beginning meet each daily circumstance of marriage in His strength which is made perfect in our weakness and by His grace which is sufficient. Thus, no marriage difficulty will be insurmountable.

In the beginning see that every thought, word and deed directed toward your spouse is characterized by “the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.”

Experiencing a “wonderful day” comes in proportion to our willingness in the beginning to fully submit to God’s Word. Think what joy and satisfaction He who created heaven and earth desires to create and will create in our marriages in the beginning, if He is fully honored and obeyed.

A joyful marriage requires that two husband and wife work together in the beginning, giving themselves to each other as Christ has given Himself.

God has an instruction manual for marriage. Read it carefully and obey it fully in the beginning.

Then, have a wonderful day!

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17).

“O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee” (Psa. 63:1).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 11

“The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded” (Gen. 11:5).

One winter, when our boys were small, we bought them an electric train. Using some pieces of scrap lumber and carefully sanding the edges, I made an inexpensive set of building blocks. These, along with a few sturdy cardboard boxes, were all they needed to build an imaginary railroad empire on their bedroom floor something that kept them happily occupied for many cold, dreary winter days.

Of course, my wife and I both enjoyed watching them, but after an emotionally draining day at work, I personally found it even more satisfying to get down on the floor and play with them. What happy times we had together, building structures out of cardboard boxes and blocks to place over and around the train track!

After the flood, men with whom God desired to have fellowship (Gen. 3:9) began to build a structure, a monument to their pride. What they were building brought no joy to the heart of God, nor could He have fellowship with them in their efforts.

Man’s heart, not changed by the flood, began building that monument to himself, rejecting any thought of wanting fellowship with God in their effort. But God was perfectly mindful, watching what they attempted to build, and His heart could not be with them in fellowship, rest or joy.

Unable to have communion with what was being erected in rebellious pride, God brought a solemn government on man’s attempt a division of languages, which, of necessity, caused a division of mankind into many tongues and nations.

Division and separation is an unhappy state for society and a more tragic condition for marriage. “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth” (Prov. 5:18).

Marriage ought to be a continual building process—never a dividing or separating process. It should be the forming into what God desires should be a beautiful edifice one which both partners build, delighting in the joy of doing so “together.” “They two shall be one” (Eph. 5:31).

Marriage ought to never be characterized by pride or rebellion towards God or towards a spouse. “By pride there only cometh contention” (Prov. 13:10 JND). Contention and destruction are not God’s mind for the marriage union. “Pride goeth before destruction” (Prov. 16:18).

God intends that marriage will continue with increasing joy all during life. “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine.... Thou hast kept the good wine until now” (John 2:10). Successfully building such a marriage requires the energy of both partners. It is not enough for one spouse to sit back and “watch” while the other builds alone.

Though she was, in reality, deceiving Samson, we may apply morally Delilah’s question as being one of the keys to building and enjoying a happy marriage: “How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?” (Judg. 16:15).

Ed.

The Christian Shepherd: 2004, "And He Loved Her": 10

“Unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan” (Gen. 10:25).

Names carry greater importance than merely being a means of identification. During the 1930s, many Europeans thought the names “Hitler” and “Nazi” promised new power, wealth and revival of lost national pride. Yet, a few years later those same two names were despised, being synonymous with death, war, hatred, torture, suffering and defeat.

As head of creation, Adam named the animals, and later he named his companion (Gen. 2:23). Since then names have carried great significance meanings intended by the one giving the name (see Genesis 29:32, for example) or as often characterizing the habits or reputation of one who bears the name.

After the flood two sons were born to Eber. The meaning of their names is significant. Peleg means division, and Joktan, smallness. Just a few verses before, we also read of Nimrod (meaning rebellion), builder of the kingdom of Babel, which in Scripture is synonymous with religious pride and corruption.

When morally applied to the marriage union, these names are striking. Rebellion (Nimrod) and pride (the tower of Babel) results in division (Gen. 11:7-9), causing smallness and separation rather than growth, strength and unity.

Rebellion against God's order in marriage (often resulting from pride) also brings division. Marital joy and strength are sapped while love between husband and wife weakens. Commitment to each other, contentment with each other and convictions held in fellowship between each other become divided. If left unjudged and unconfessed, such tendencies may very easily lead to the devastation of divorce.

How important to be "of one mind" in the Lord, for both partners to enjoy dwelling "together in unity" rather than allowing pride to divide hearts. Talking, walking and working together in love is the key to a happy, vibrant marriage relationship. But both husband and wife must willingly, actively be engaged in this effort. Half a team will not make a whole marriage! Happy marital unity requires humility as well as love on the part of both husband and wife. Individual pride and selfishness is as destructive to marriage as individual apathy.

Aquila and Priscilla present a beautiful example of love and service working together in happy unity in marriage. Aquila is mentioned first in their work as tentmakers (Acts 18:23). Later, when Paul goes to Jerusalem, Priscilla, because of her deep devotion to the Apostle, is mentioned first (vs. 18). But when expounding to Apollos more perfectly the truths learned from the Apostle, Aquila, in moral seemliness, takes the lead (vs. 26). When Paul sends affectionate greetings to them (Rom. 16:3), Priscilla is again mentioned first. What a lovely moral example of marital love, order and unity. May our marriages be marked by this same character! "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3).

Ed.

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