Genesis - Commentaries by John Brereton

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I would like to turn, first of all tonight, brethren, to the second chapter of Genesis. What I have before me tonight is to consider the subject of light and darkness. And to consider the subject of light and darkness from the point of view of God's sovereign act. And from the point of view of our responsibility, we find them both marked very carefully for us in this precious word. But first of all, I would like to draw your attention to some verses in Genesis chapter 2 and Genesis chapter 3. In all this Genesis chapter 2 and verse 8. 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 knowledge of good and evil. Then the third chapter. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yeah, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat. And gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sold fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. My brethren, the reason I read this scripture before we turn to the other passages I have before me. Is to draw your attention to the fact that when God gives us the description of the garden in the second chapter, He specifically tells us in the end of the ninth verse the tree of life also in the midst of the garden. And the tree of knowledge of good and Evil. Now I have no doubt that the tree of life. In its ultimate picture is a type of Christ, a picture of Christ. That tree of life was the center of the garden. And it specifically called the Tree of life the source of life. But when we come to the third chapter, we find that when Eve is tempted by the serpent. She displaces the tree of life in her mind, and to her the tree of life is no longer the tree in the midst of the garden. For her, the tree that's in the midst of the garden is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And so when you go to the third chapter, she specifically says in the third verse. But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it. Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. Our brethren, it's vital to. To us in the considerations that we will have before us tonight if the Lord permit. That we remember that God has only one standard. And that standard is Christ.

When the subject is the Sinner, it says all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And the only one who met God's standard is Christ. The one who in himself was the display of the glory of God. And so we find when God gives us this picture of the garden, he sets before us the fact that the tree of life is the one that's in the midst of that garden, and then brings in the fact that there's a responsibility connected with it too. And that's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now when we have the assembly before us. The principle remains the same. Christ is the center. And all matters that come before us must ever be considered in the light of the One who is in the midst Christ, the center. Now we also have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and so consequently. There is our responsibility. We have a responsibility to act in obedience to the Word of God. But we find that when Eve is tempted. As I mentioned before, she loses sight or ignores the fact that the Tree of Life is what is in the midst of the garden and looks solely at the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil and speaks of it as being in the midst of the garden. And the result is in looking solely at, can I say the tree of responsibility and losing sight of the place of the tree of life. She is left, then, to her own reasoning. And she looked at the tree and decides on the basis of what appears good to her, that she should eat of the tree. And the result was sin came into the world. Our brethren, we have this principle. To be considered in the light of our families. For instance, there are fathers and mothers here tonight. Some with young children. If you view in the light of what we have here, the tree that's in the midst of your garden. Your family, your home, if you view the tree that's in the midst of that garden as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What you're going to do is lay down a lot of rules and regulations. Perhaps even add to the Word of God as Eve did. But using your own mind to do the reasoning. Your home isn't going to be a garden at all. You're going to forfeit. The place that God wants your family, your home to be. A garden. But if? You find in your home that Christ is the center. That everything in your home centers around the Lord Jesus Christ. If the children in your home are given to see that the tree of life. Is the tree in the midst of your garden? Then we find that everything then takes its proper course. Because with the standards set by the recognition of the Lord Jesus as the center of your home, then we find room for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and act as responsible parents to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But recognizing. That Christ is there. The same is true in the assembly. We never judge rightly unless we recognize. That the Lord Jesus is the center of his people and that whatever. Is allowed in the assembly or not allowed in the assembly? Is to be decided on the basis of to whom we're gathered. The Holiness. Of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is the center of his people. Now I could mention I wouldn't. But I could mention, and I speak to my own heart, I'm not pointing a finger at others when I say this. The homes of dear Christians, dear beloved Saints of God.

Who have raised their children in the ultimate of strictness. The children were prohibited, in effect, from everything. There was a law for every circumstance. But the Lord Jesus was not set before the children. All they saw was rules and regulations. And the time came. When they rebelled. They hadn't had the Tree of Life set before them either, in Word. Or in practice, just the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Things added to the word. And the result is the tree of life is displaced in the home. In the assembly. Before our children. And the result is sadness. And as we see ultimately. There now, as we look at this subject of light and darkness, I trust that we'll have before our hearts this principle. That when God separates between light and darkness, he is setting before us absolute moral values. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the pattern. The tree of life. You turn back to the first chapter of Genesis now for a moment. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of

the waters. And God said, let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good, and God divided. The light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. Now I'd like you to just keep that place for a moment and turn over to 2nd Corinthians chapter 4. 2nd Corinthians, chapter 4. The fourth verse, In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not. Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Our beloved brethren, we find that first of all in the subject of light and darkness. And we'll find it all here in this first chapter of Genesis God sets before us. His own acting in sovereign grace. We next find He sets before us Christ as the one who is the display of His Holiness and grace. And then we find our responsibility right before us. We find here, first of all, God tells us of a scene where darkness was the characteristic that the Spirit of God saw wherever he went. Notice it says in that second verse, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. It was a scene characterized by darkness. It's not my thought tonight to go into the. What happened before this? But something that God does not describe to us happened, that caused the first creation that came from the hand of God to be ruined.

Now, in principle, exactly the same thing happened with man. When man came from the hand of God, the Lord God could look upon the scene and say it was very good, But something came in, and God's creation of man became a thing of ruin. Man fell and what the Spirit of God then saw. Was a scene of darkness. It was a scene in which man, Adam and Eve pictured to us so graphically there in the third chapter of Genesis. Hid themselves. From the presence of the Lord. They knew full well that the result of their sin was. Moral darkness. They were not suited. To the presence of the one who is light. Well, in creation, the Spirit of God faced such a situation. God acted and it says in the third verse. And God said, let there be light and there was light. I understand. I am certainly no Hebrew scholar by any means, but I understand that literally translated this verse is God said like be and likewise. Now, brethren, what did this scene of confusion do to receive the light? What act did the darkness take? None whatsoever. God acted and brought light into the midst of darkness. Now we turn it over to 2nd Corinthians chapter 4, and what do we find? Exactly the same thing set before us, the human heart, morally at a distance from God, a scene of darkness. And God commanded, the one who had commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light. Of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And I trust that is true of everyone here in this room tonight, that God by His grace hath brought the light into your heart, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Oh, brethren, what did we do to merit salvation? Nothing whatsoever. Our hearts were as dark morally as this world was dark physically. But God has brought light out of darkness. But then you notice it says in Genesis chapter one and God saw the light that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness. Now God created, God acted, God spoke. And light was, but then it tells us specifically. That God divided. Light from darkness. My brethren, put very simply in terms that we would use today, what is morally pictured to us here is a scene where there are no what we call Gray areas. God doesn't speak of twilight and dust. He talks about light. And darkness and God separates. He divided between what was light and what was darkness. No more a mixture. No thought of a mixture whatsoever. A clear cut division between light and darkness. And this distinctly tells us and God called the light day. And the darkness he called night. He not only divided them, but he gave them different names. No confusion, no mix up, no carryover from one to the other. A clear cut division between light.

And darkness. Now I would like you to turn over with me please to 1St John chapter one. One John. Chapter One. And verse 5. This then is the message which we have heard of him. And declare unto you that God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness. We lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Now we noticed in Genesis chapter one that God divided the light from the darkness. Here it distinctly tells us that light is the character of God. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But then it tells us if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness. We lie and do not the truth, but if we walk in the light as He is in the light. Our brethren, I mentioned, and I'm sure these things are not new. I don't mean to suggest that they are new to any of you here. We noticed in Genesis chapter one that it was God's sovereign act to bring light. Where there was only darkness. And then he divided between the light and the darkness. Well, God has shone into your heart and mind by grace. And he has divided between light and darkness. And if you are a child of God tonight, if you belong to Christ. You are in the light, That's where God has brought you. Into the light. It isn't a question of your walk, of your obedience, any more than your salvation was a question of your walk or your obedience. It's a question of what God has done. He separated between light and darkness, and here we have those who are in the light. And those who are in the darkness. If you belong to Christ, you are in the light. You walk in the light. I understand. Some older brother may be able to tell me differently afterwards, but I believe it was Mr. Potter. Many years ago somebody asked Mr. Potter what happens if a Christian turns his back on the light. And his answer was it will just shine on his back. Because he's in the light and he can't get out of it. That's where he's been introduced into the light. God is light, and what we have in this chapter particularly is the subject of communion to be enjoyed in the light. And it is such a precious thing, beloved brethren, to see that God brings before us in the very verse where he says, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. We are in the light, and what has made us suited to that light is the blood of Jesus Christ. As one brother put it many years ago, everything that the light exposes, the blood cleanses, and the result is we are suited to the light. Now. This is God's sovereign acting in grace. You're a child of God, you've been brought into the light, and that's where you walk.

Regardless of what you allow in your life. You walk in the light positionally because God has brought you there. Now if you would turn with me, please, to Ephesians. Chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. And verse 8. The first part of the verse. For ye were sometimes darkness. But now are ye light in the Lord? Now this is true of every child of God. We were at one time darkness. Now you notice the language. It doesn't say that we were one time in the dark. We were sometimes darkness, that is, that we were identified with the moral condition of darkness. But now. Are ye light in the Lord? Brethren, God has not only shone into our hearts to give the light of the glorious gospel of Christ in the gospel of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He has not only brought us by grace into the light. But he has told us that we are light in the Lord. Isn't it a marvelous thing, beloved brethren, that the Word of God should describe those who were sometimes morally identified with the condition of darkness, but God separated between light and darkness? And now he tells us that we are identified. With the light, we are light in the Lord. And now if you return, please to 1St Thessalonians chapter 5. First Thessalonians, chapter 5. And verse 5. Ye are all the children of light and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness. And we're not only spoken of as light in the Lord. But God speaks of us as the children of light. You are all the children of light and the children of the day. We go back to the first chapter of Genesis, and it tells us distinctly there that God called the light day. And the darkness he called night. Now it tells us that not only has God worked sovereignly to bring light out of darkness, not only has he brought us into the light so that we walk in the light as He is in the light, not only has he morally conformed us as to

what God has done to that light. By saying that we are light in, the Lord identified us with the light. But he has told us that we are the children of light and identified with the day. Now, brethren, this is what God has done. He divided between the light and the darkness. And every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ here tonight is a child of the day. How could we go back to Genesis chapter one for a moment? Genesis chapter one and verse 14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons.

And for days and years. And let them be for light in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth. And it was so. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also, and God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth. And to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the 4th day. Now, if you would just keep your finger there again, please, and turn it over to John's Gospel Chapter 8. John's Gospel, chapter 8 and verse 12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The 9th chapter. And the fourth verse. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. John's Gospel chapter 15 I think it is. John's Gospel chapter 15 and verse 22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sinned. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my father. Brendan we find back in Genesis chapter one. That in the early part of the chapter that we read, God divided between the light and the darkness. But now we find that God speaks of having appointed or made two great lights. And he says distinctly in the 18th verse, to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light. From the darkness. Now these two great lights, I'm sure you realize, are the sun and the moon. And he tells us he made the stars also. And in that sun, that greater light, the one that is the source of. Heat source of life in so many ways. Scientifically, as far as this world is concerned, we have such a lovely picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater light. And when he was here in this world, he was here as in a body that had been prepared for him. And here in this world, as long as he was in the world, he was the light of the world. And what did he do? All brethren, he ruled over the day. Now there's going to come a day when his rule is going to be manifested in power. When He is truly going to rule in all majesty and glory. But while he was here in this world, while he was the light of the world. Sin had no dominion. Sin was rebuked by his presence. He was the light. And he divided between the light and the darkness. And so it was, we find when we look at those verses in John chapter 15. The Lord Jesus speaks of himself as the one who had come and having come.

Man had no cloak for his sin. We go back to Genesis chapter 3 and what do we find? We find Adam and Eve have sowed fig leaves together, made themselves aprons. But the Lord God comes. And they hide. They have no cloak for their sin, nothing that will enable them to. Stand in the presence of light because they're morally dark. Now, beloved brethren, the Lord Jesus divided between the day and the night. He divided between the light. And the darkness and as it says so beautifully here in the 14th verse. Let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years. Here was a light. A great light, Oh, what a marvelous light. And brethren, can I say it, set the pattern for the life of those who were to be identified with the light? John, James, Peter, those who came to him, Mary Magdalene. They found that their whole life, everything, signs, seasons, days, years, everything centered was fixed, was determined by that great light, that marvelous light that had come into the world. He divided between light and darkness. God had done it in the. Power in. As an act sovereignly of God. Earlier we find, but here was one. A great light. And while he was here? There was number confusion between light and darkness. There was number question. As to what was sin and what was not sin. The standard was Christ. He was there what was suited to his presence. Was light. What was not suited to his presence was darkness. And there were no areas in between light and darkness. But the Lord Jesus is not here anymore. They cast him out. They rejected that light. In the third chapter of John's Gospel, the Lord Jesus. Gives us in a sense of moral anticipation of what man's result was going to be. When he said men loved darkness rather than light. Because their deeds are evil. And so the result is that they put out the greater light. But there's another light. And this is the light. Physically speaking, hear the light of the moon. It's that light, beloved brethren, that reflects the light of the sun. And it's the light that shines. At a time of darkness. But you notice the language that's used in the 14th verse it talks about. Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Let them be for likes in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth. And it was so. God made two great lights, the 17th. First, God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night. And to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. Now, brethren, what is brought before us here is the sun and the moon, the greater light and the lesser light. But the testimony, the effect.

The light. The signs, the seasons, the days, the years of both. Are to be the same. Now, I don't mean by that. That the moon gives the same amount of light. God very jealously guards that which is connected with His Son, and He talks about the greater light and the lesser light, but they, the greater light and the lesser light were to be for signs. And Four Seasons. For days and for years. In other words. The effect of the sun. That rule that it exercised? That display before the world. The character of the light. Was to be the same. And brethren, this is vital for us to lay hold of Indiana, our souls. We find that the lights were to be for signs. And for seasons. For days and for years. The Lord Jesus, when He was here, was the full display in himself of that light. Now. As far as his glory was concerned, it was veiled. To a large extent, not his moral glory, but the display of that glory and power was veiled. Except for those rare occasions when the Lord Jesus allowed it to be displayed. But there was never any question. As to the moral character of God, who is light displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now he was for signs. You and I are to be for the same kind of sign. For seasons. For days and for years. All, brethren, he didn't belong to this world, and neither do you and I. He was going back to his father. And you and I anticipate leaving here at any moment. He was set apart. As belonging to heaven, though in grace he reached out to the Sinner. And you and I are set apart. We belong to heaven. You know, there's a most marvelous verse in First Corinthians 15 and I have enjoyed meditating on it so much in the last few months time and again. It says, as is the heavenly. So are they also that are heavenly? Think of that for a moment. As is the heavenly. Is there any question in your mind that the Lord Jesus. Is the man out of heaven? That he is in every possible way suited to heaven. Can I use such a term as saying heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ? Are identified one with the other. While the word of God says as is the heavenly, so are they also that are heavenly. You belong to heaven, and I say it reverently. Beloved brethren, you and I belong to heaven now. As much as the Lord Jesus does. As is the heavenly. Now it says in the 18th verse. These lights were to rule over the day and over the night. Well, it's the night time. They put out the light. And now, since that great light in that sense has been put out, the lesser light. Has been here to display.

It's a picture of the church. It's a picture of a corporate testimony to what is suited to Christ to display that light. And it says that they are to rule. Over the day. And now, over the night. Now, brethren, how do we rule? Well, if we were to turn to Romans chapter 6, we won't take the time, but you know the verse very well. It gives us to see there that the result. Of the work of Christ is that sin has no more dominion over us. Brethren, I can never under any possible circumstances ever since. And say I couldn't help it. Since I became a child of God. If I sin against the

Lord, it's because I chose to. And there is no other excuse ever for it. Because now that you and I are children of God. Sin no more has dominion. Now in that 6th chapter of Romans when it talks about the Lord Jesus. It says Death hath no more dominion over him. That is that at Calvary the Lord Jesus voluntarily. Submitted himself to the power of death. And then rose triumphant over it. But he was never subject. To the power of sin. Sin never had dominion over him, but it did over you. And it did over me. But no more. When we belong to Christ. We not only are brought into the light, made children of the light and children of the day. But we are delivered from the power. The power of darkness. We sin no longer has dominion. And we are to rule over the night. The knight is not to rule over us. And it goes on to say. And to divide the light from the darkness. Now God divided the light from the darkness and brought you into the light, and brought me into the light, identified us with the light, made us children of light and children of the day. And now you and I are called upon to divide. Between the light and the darkness, all you say. I thought God did that. He did. We go back to the fourth verse that says God divided the lights in the darkness. But now it says. That that greater light is to divide the light from the darkness. And he did. And now it says the lesser light is to divide the light from the darkness. Brethren, are we doing that? Are we doing that, dividing the light from the darkness? Remember, God has acted to bring us into the light. That's what he's done in Sovereign Grace. But now we're called upon to divide. The light from the darkness. To turn with me again to Ephesians chapter 5 for a moment. Ephesians chapter 5. Verse 8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. But rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light.

For whatsoever doth make manifesties light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead. And Christ shall give thee light. Some of you older brethren here I know will remember. My dearly beloved servant of Christ, who's been with the Lord for many years. Who used to remind our hearts so often? But every exhortation of Scripture is founded upon what you possess. Never on doing something together. We see that brought out so simply here. Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. In other words, brethren, you and I are children of light. And that's how we're to walk. We couldn't conceive, I'm sure, of someone like Prince Charles, who's often used as an example. We can't, couldn't conceive of Prince Charles responding very well to the suggestion that if he walked circumspectly, he might one day become the Prince of Wales. His answer would be I am the Prince of Wales. But what about the suggestion that since you are the Prince of Wales, there's a conduct that's becoming to one who is the Prince of Wales? Brethren, we are the children of Light. Now God is giving us to see here in the strongest possible language. The need to separate between light and darkness. But now are ye lighting the Lord walk as children of light, for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. No Gray areas. No, brethren, no Gray areas. Is of God, is according to righteousness. And goodness and truth. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. Not what is acceptable unto the brethren. Not what is acceptable unto us as parents when we view it in the light of our families. But what is acceptable unto the Lord? And have no fellowship. With the unfruitful works of darkness. But rather reprove them. O brethren, remember, go back, if you will please, to what we were talking about at the beginning of this meeting. What Saints? What sex? The moral character of what is acceptable to God is Christ. He is the one who is in the midst. On the tree of the garden he is the one. And when our eyes are upon Christ. There is no place for human reasoning. But when we simply look at our own responsibility and get our eyes off the standard of Christ. Then we're just like Eve. We're cast adrift to whatever seems good to the eyes, whatever seems good to eat, whatever seems acceptable to ourselves. And not. What is according? To the holiness of. And so we find it says, For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the Light, for whatsoever doth make manifest his life. Whatsoever doth make manifest. Is light. The light. Is that into which we have been brought. Now we're to walk as children of light. And as walking as children of light, we are a display of the light.

And that should have the effect of reproving. All the works of darkness. You remember the beautiful story told about our dear brother in Lansing, MI. Sure, many of the president have heard it, but to my own soul, it's exceedingly sweet. The time he was in the lunch room at the plant where he worked. And somebody told a story that wasn't very nice at all, and he didn't even smile. And one of the men asked him what was wrong. Why didn't he join in the laughter with the others? And his answer was. I dwell in the presence of God. My brethren, there is the light that reproves the darkness. It goes on to say, Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from. And if you'll allow me to to mention it, it should read, Rise from among the dead, and Christ shall give you light, or Christ shall shine upon thee. When a man is sleeping amongst a lot of dead people. It's very difficult to tell who's dead and who's asleep. But when the cry comes and says wake. Can you see the difference? The ones who hear the voice. It proves that they weren't dead, they were just sleeping. And they arise. And the light shines upon you. The Lord Jesus looks for you and I, beloved brethren, to divide the darkness. So that every decision that S made by you as a parent. By you as just one of the young people in your moral decisions that you make at school tomorrow. The questions that are going to arise in your class this week or next week. Those who go to work. Those who are parents, the decisions were faced to make in our families. The decisions that must be made in the assembly. Brethren, they must always divide between light and darkness. And what is decided must always be in accordance. With the holiness of the one. Who is in the midst? Remember, the tree in the midst of the garden is the tree of life. Not just the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now God has acted. Our time has gone. God has acted. In marvelous grace, brethren, if we were to turn over to Genesis chapter 21, a chapter that's well known to us to many here. We would find a description of a coming scene of Glory, a city. A city that has the glory of God. And it has no need of the sun or the moon. And has no need of lights to shine in darkness. It has no need of lights to separate between light and darkness. Because everything that is there is morally suited to the presence of God. Having the presence of God. A scene of glory where everything that the eye of God rests upon. Is suited to himself as light. Brethren, may we be diligent. May we be cast upon the Lord for our children. May we be cast upon the Lord in our personal decisions. And may we be cast upon the Lord in the assembly. That everything that we do. Everything that we allow, every decision that our children see us making. That by the grace of God, it divides between light and darkness. And that what is done, what is said, what is decided is suited. To the light. And to which we have been brought by grace.

The Divine Ground of Gathering, Part 1

The subject we have before us is that which is often referred to as “The Ground of Gathering.” We find, when we look at this wonderful subject, that in order to begin any consideration of it, we must go back to the Old Testament. This is because the concept of the Lord’s gathering a people to His name where He might enjoy their company around Himself — where worship, prayer, godly order and discipline might be exercised — is found in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament.

I believe when we consider a subject like “The Ground of Gathering” and how the Lord would have us to meet together collectively, there is always a danger of its becoming an intellectual exercise and not that which engages the heart’s affections. I believe in my own soul that God has very wisely and in a most lovely way guarded against this possibility by introducing the subject in the Old Testament in the midst of an account that very largely touches our hearts.

Let us look at Genesis 22:119:

“And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.“Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?“And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And He said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.“And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.”

In the book of Ecclesiastes reference is made to the threefold cord that is not easily broken, and I believe we find in this chapter, in a most remarkable way, how God has woven a threefold cord. If we keep in mind three aspects, or the three strands of the cord, as we consider the subject of “The Ground of Gathering,” we will find that it is not simply a matter of knowledge. It is not simply a matter of knowing the place, but there must be faith to walk in the path that God has marked out, and there must be the response of the heart that flows out to the One who gave His Son and to the Son who offered Himself without spot to God. Now I would like to go through this chapter three times to follow each one of the cords as the Lord gives us to see them.

The first and most precious cord we have brought before us in this chapter is that of the father and the son. We find in the first verse God did try, or tempt, Abraham, and in the second verse He said, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering.”

Beloved brethren, God the Father was revealing, in this account of Abraham and Isaac, that wondrous revelation of grace that was to be made known so many centuries later when, here in this world, a Father and His Son would go to an altar of sacrifice together, and there the Father would see His Son offered up as a sacrifice for sin. And so He speaks of “thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest.”

God knew the love that Abraham had for his son, but it was just a pale reflection of the love that God the Father had for His Son. That love had existed from a past eternity. When the Word of God speaks of the Lord Jesus as the Son, it isn’t with any thought of inferiority to the Father. It isn’t that His stature is any less or His power any less, but it brings before our hearts a relationship in affection that exists between the Father and His Son. When we read, “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world,” how much more, beloved brethren, that means than simply saying the Father sent Jesus. It was His Son, and here Isaac, the type of the Son, is to be offered up as a sacrifice.

The third verse says, “Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering.” Clave the wood! I believe the thought in the “wood” is the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember how that in the tabernacle the ark was made of wood, but then it was covered with gold? We have that spotless humanity pictured to us in the wood. It was the Father who clave the wood, so the Word of God says, “A body hast Thou prepared Me.” A body was prepared so that the Son could come and here He could die for you and for me!

In verse 6, “Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.” He laid the wood upon Isaac his son. That took place in Bethlehem’s manger, when the wood was laid upon God’s eternal Son and He came forth, born of a woman, a babe here who had been given the body prepared for Him. The wood was laid upon Him in order that He might be the sacrifice for sin.

He took the fire in his hand and a knife, and they went both of them together. So it is, beloved brethren, when we look at Calvary, we see there that the Father and the Son went together. The Lord Jesus could say of His disciples that they would forsake Him and He would be left alone, but then He says in John’s gospel, “Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.” “The Father is with Me.” “They went both of them together.”

But there was also the fire and the knife. The fire speaks to us of the judgment — God’s judgment against sin — that was to fall upon the sacrifice. It was to be a burnt offering. The knife reminds us that the Son was to be offered up in sacrifice.

We find in verse 7 that “Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Isaac, the type of the Lord Jesus, makes no mention of the knife, just the fire and the wood. Why is that? As we have said, the wood is His humanity, the body that was prepared for Him in order that He might die. The fire tells of God’s judgment that was to fall upon the Son. The knife is not mentioned here because Isaac is a type of the Lord Jesus, who in John’s Gospel told His disciples He was going to lay down His life (John 10:17-18). He, as the Son, was not going to need anyone to take His life

from Him. He had power to lay it down and He was to offer Himself without spot to God.

We find a question is then asked: “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” That precious answer is given, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.” I believe it is particularly lovely to notice how, over and over again here, reference is made to the “burnt offering.” That offering speaks particularly of the fragrance of the sacrifice to God. It tells how the sacrifice was offered wholly to God — consumed entirely upon the altar. It says here that “God will provide Himself.” I suggest, brethren, that perhaps at times we read this verse as if it said that God will Himself provide, but I believe that the emphasis is that God provides for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering. The burnt offering is for God, and God provides the sacrifice that is for Himself.

“God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.” The time had come for the son to be offered up in sacrifice. That time came nearly two thousand years ago when God’s own Son, together with His Father, came to Calvary. They came to that moment when the Lord Jesus Himself could say, “Now is the Son of Man glorified.” The hour is come!

But in the account that is given to us here, there is a substitute provided for Isaac. This is particularly lovely in connection with a different type that we will look at in a few minutes, but we do find there is a substitute provided for Isaac, and the substitute is a ram. The ram in the Word of God is used in connection with consecration. It is a picture of devotedness. When we look at verse 13, we read, “And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.”

Abraham lifted up his eyes and he saw a substitute! What a wonderful intervention of God for Abraham, but there was no one to take the place of God’s Son. He is not only pictured to us in Isaac, as to the relationship in affection between the father and the son, but God’s Son is pictured to us in the ram that was caught in a thicket by his horns. He was the ram of consecration. He was the One who was held to Calvary’s cross by the very devotedness of His consecration to the will and purpose of God. The ram was caught in a thicket by his horns, the very symbol of his power, and so it was with the Lord Jesus at Calvary’s cross. It was the very strength of His love that held Him there.

But there was also a thicket — “caught in a thicket by his horns.” I don’t have to look any further than my own heart to find that thicket. It was my sins, in all their awfulness upon the blessed Saviour at Calvary. This One was held there by the very strength of His love. But your sins and mine were upon Him in the three hours of darkness at Calvary, if we belong to Christ.

We find that the ram was offered up in the stead of Isaac. So it is that Calvary’s work is finished and we look back now and see that finished work. Our hearts go out to the One who died for us at Calvary. As we follow through the Word of God, the thought or thread of being gathered by the Spirit of God, according to the Word of God, I trust will always be before us, that the One who speaks to our hearts is the One who was “caught in a thicket by his horns” and who was offered up in your place and mine.

There is a remarkable thing in verse 19 of our chapter. We read, “So Abraham returned unto his young men.” No mention is made of Isaac. Now, we know from the account that Isaac was not offered up. I believe that Isaac returned with Abraham, but God is bringing a type before your heart and mine. Thus, in the type, Abraham returns alone. The son has been offered up in type in the ram that died on the altar as the sacrifice.

I would like you to turn back now to Genesis 21:12: “And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Note these words: “For in Isaac shall thy seed be called”!

Now turn to Hebrews 11:17-19: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

The second cord that we find through this lovely chapter is the outline, in type, of the man of faith. Abraham was a man of faith. In Hebrews 11 we have a number of individuals mentioned, and what characterized those who are mentioned there is that they lived by faith. The faith that is mentioned in Hebrews 11 and is brought before us here in the case of Abraham is not so much the faith that saves, but it is the faith by which we live. It is faith that trusts God and relies on His promises and acts upon them. So we find in Genesis 21 that Abraham was given a promise. The promise was that “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Abraham was to see grandchildren and great-grandchildren through Isaac. He was going to see a nation raised up that God had promised to him. It would be through Isaac.

Now we come to Genesis 22:2. God says to Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” “In Isaac shall thy seed be called”! Now God tells Abraham to go and offer up Isaac as a sacrifice — as a burnt offering. Did Abraham believe God’s promise?

The answer is not found directly in Genesis 22. It is found in what he did, but in Hebrews 11 it is found in what he thought. In Genesis 22 the man of faith shows that he believed God. He rises up early in the morning and takes Isaac his son, and they proceed to that mountain that God showed him, and there he binds his son to put him upon the altar. Then we find that faith is answered, and, as we have already noticed, there is a substitute for Isaac. The result is that Isaac is delivered; he doesn’t have to die. The man of faith believed the promise and acted upon it, and acting in faith took him to the place where he saw the “ram caught in a thicket by his horns.” He believed God and he took his direction from God. The difficulties were overcome by faith, and he ends up by calling the name of the place Jehovah-jireh — the Lord will provide.

Beloved brethren, if we are going to be in the place of the Lord’s choosing — if we are going to be where the Lord would have us to be according to His Word — there must, first of all, be the answer of the heart that responds to that love told out at Calvary. There must then be faith to act upon God’s promises, because to be in the place of the Lord’s choosing will not be easy, but it will indeed be blessed.

In Hebrews we are told that Abraham accounted that God was able to raise him from the dead. Let me put it this way: Abraham thought in his heart, God has given me a promise. Now if God wants me to kill my own son, I’ll do it, because I have a promise from God, and, if necessary,

God can raise him up from the dead. You and I have been given promises too, beloved brethren. We have been given promises, and faith lays hold of God's promises and acts accordingly. So we see in this chapter a lovely picture of the man of faith who believes God, acts accordingly, and lives to say, "The Lord will provide."

I would like now to look at the third cord that is brought before us in this chapter. It is the most lovely way in which Abraham is led to the one mountaintop where there was a "ram caught in a thicket by his horns." You notice it says in the first verse, "God did tempt [or try] Abraham." He was testing Abraham and said to him, "Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am."

We see Abraham's response to the first test; the Lord wants to speak to him. Does Abraham want to listen? You meet, from time to time, dear children of God who love the Lord Jesus earnestly and sincerely. But when you seek to bring before them the truth of the one body of Christ and of being gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to His name alone and acting on the truth of the one body, they very quickly give you to understand that they really don't want to hear.

Well, the man of faith says, "Here I am. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." How many mountains were there in the land of Moriah? I have no idea, but I do know that God had one mountain in mind where Abraham was to go. It has been very precious to me in meditating upon this chapter to realize that if Abraham had gone to any other mountain, he would not have found a "ram caught in a thicket by his horns." There was one to which the Lord wanted to take him, but there was a cost involved! Was Abraham prepared to pay the cost? It meant offering up that which was very dear and precious to himself, his son whom he loved.

This happens with God's dear children as He seeks to lead them to that mountaintop where they can view the ram and, in worship, offer him up. Very often it means a sacrifice that can be very hard. Sometimes it can mean being separated from loved ones, separated from parents, separated from brothers and sisters, sometimes from children who don't see it the way you do.

The question that was put to Abraham here, in type, was: There is a place, but will you pay the cost? Abraham's answer was that he "rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him." He wanted to be there. He was willing to go. He was willing to pay the cost, and so he goes to the place, but he hasn't seen it yet.

Then we find in verse 4 that "on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." "Lifted up his eyes"! How precious that is! We will find it mentioned again later on in this chapter. In order to see the place, and it was a mountaintop, Abraham had to lift up his eyes! If he looked around, all he would see was the plain, but there was a mountain, a place, where the Lord would have him to be!

Also, this verse tells us it was on the third day. We will notice, as we look at this subject further, how often this subject of the "third day" comes up in connection with the Lord's leading to the place where He would have us to be. The "third day" would bring before us the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it is only as we know that precious truth that Jesus died for us and rose from the dead, that Calvary's work is finished, that we are seen as dead and risen with Him, that we are going to be able to view the place where the Lord would lead us.

"Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." The young men had no more acceptance at that place where the Lord was leading Abraham than had the dumb ass, the unclean animal. The young men would bring before us the energy of the flesh. In going to this place to which the Lord was leading Abraham, separation from unbelievers and self-judgment on the flesh in the believer are both required.

The young men are left behind. There is another thought to exercise our hearts, particularly the young people, in connection with the young men. You know, dear young people, you are going to have to leave many things behind too, if you are going to enjoy the precious privilege of being at the place of the Lord's choosing for you. Sometimes dear young people come to the point where they feel they really do see the place where the Lord would have them to be, but they don't want to leave the "young men." They don't want to leave their youthful companions and those things that appeal to the flesh. They don't want to leave those things behind and to put them in the place of the unclean ass. They decide to hold onto those things. They don't go any further, and, beloved brethren, that is a tragedy.

Abraham, the man of faith, leaves the young men behind, and then we find in verse 9, "They came to the place which God had told him of." What a privilege! Abraham had been willing to pay the cost by God's grace, and he had been brought, finally, to the mountaintop. With the young men left behind and the ass left behind, he had come to the place of which God had told him.

Now I submit to you that this chapter has not been written simply as an outline of the history of Abraham. The Word of God says, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Here we have a most precious lesson. The young men are left behind; the ass is left behind, and the man of faith comes, led step by step, to the place of which God had told him.

In verse 13, "Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns." How many mountains do you think had a ram caught in a thicket by his horns that day? Do you think all the mountains of Moriah were thus equipped? I don't believe so. God had led the man of faith to the place where the ram was caught in a thicket by his horns. But to see the ram, Abraham had to lift up his eyes. He looked, and behold, behind him!

Brethren, I believe that we can actually be in the very place where God would have us to be and yet fail to see the ram caught in a thicket by his horns, because we don't lift up our eyes. We find that our eyes and our hearts and our minds are taken up with the things around us. We find that we, at times, perhaps, are more taken up with the failures of our brethren or more taken up with something that was said or not said, something that was done or not done. We are more taken up with numbers, with weakness or with failure. You will never see the ram if your eyes are looking around. But when our eyes are lifted up in the place to which the Lord would lead us, there we can see the ram. There we can see the One who was the sacrifice for sin; we can see that very lovely Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the very midst, in that very place where God would lead His people and where He led Abraham in type. Now, he also had to look behind him. He had to look away from the things with which the heart and mind are normally taken up, but there was the ram!

My beloved brethren, I believe that God is still, by His Holy Spirit, leading His people to that place where, with eyes of faith lifted up, they can see the Lord Jesus Christ, the ram — the One who, out of the very devotedness of His heart to God, went to Calvary and endured all that Calvary meant to His holy soul.

In this third type, being led of God to the place, the ram is brought before us again “caught in a thicket by his horns.” Wherever God has His people gathered together by His Holy Spirit to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus is there according to His promise, but what holds Him there is the strength of His love, His horns. It is the very strength of His love for His people that holds Him there, because you know and I know that if the presence of the Lord Jesus among the two or three gathered to His name depended upon their faithfulness, He would not be there today. If it depended upon the faithfulness of the creature, there would be no such testimony in this world today. But I believe there is such a testimony among the two or three gathered where the Lord Jesus would have them to be, and there He is found, held by the very strength of His own love. If we lift up our eyes, we will see Him, and we will have the privilege, by God’s grace, of presenting Him in worship before the heart of God.

Calvary’s work will never be repeated. The Lord Jesus is never going to die again for sins, but each Lord’s Day morning, until He comes, God preserves a testimony where His own can enjoy the privilege of presenting to God afresh that wonderful burnt offering — the merits, the work and the value of His own beloved Son — in the place where the ram is “caught in a thicket by his horns.”

Conference: 1978, He Made the Stars Also

Address—J. Brereton

I'd like to turn tonight just very briefly, for one verse in Numbers chapter 24. Numbers chapter 24 and verse 17. These were words that were spoken by Balaam. And he says, I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. Now there's no doubt, I believe, beloved brethren, that Balaam was a lost soul. There's nothing that gives us to believe in any way that he was a true child of God, but he was given. To speak prophetically here, the truth of God, and particularly what I would like to speak on tonight, is this subject of the Star. You know, the Lord Jesus is the one who's spoken of here as the one who is a star out of Jacob. The one who would come, and as it says here would smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Chef, the scepter that should rise out of Israel. And so, first and foremost, the star looked at separately, the star looked at as we have it here, the star out of Jacob is the Lord Jesus. Christ. The one who will come, establish his reign in righteousness, will rule with equity, will put down his enemies, and will establish a Kingdom that will never be moved. What we find in the word of God, that there are stars spoken of. Associated with this glorious star out of Jacob. And I believe that we find that the stars are brought before us, or a star is brought before us in the word of God. In three different ways. First of all, we have the star or stars brought before us. As a type of individual believers. Associated by wondrous grace with the star, the star Jacob. We also find that the star, I believe, is brought before us as a type of the Holy Spirit. As the one who is the source of light from heaven. And thirdly, of course, we have the star brought before us as the Lord Jesus in a particular character, and that is as the soon coming one. Now, I'd like to follow these through the Word of God very briefly tonight. Would you turn with me, first of all to Genesis chapter one? Genesis chapter one and verse 16. And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. My brethren, I'm sure many of us have meditated with a great deal of profit on this first chapter of Genesis. God outlines virtually the whole truth of Scripture in type in the book of Genesis. And there's a great deal of it right here in the very first chapter. And we have in these first that we've just read, particularly the last clause. That line of things which should be and I trust is enjoyed by everyone of us here in this room. It says he made the stars. Also. Now the Son, that supreme light. That was given of God to rule the day, I have no doubt is a picture in type of the source of light, the Lord Jesus Himself. We also have the moon, the type given of God of the church that reflects that light and a day of darkness. But then it adds these simple words, He made the stars also.

Now, brethren, the stars had nothing to do with being made stars. If I could put it this way, they were not consulted. They didn't have to do anything to become stars. They were made stars. You know in Ephesians chapter one it speaks of God. Who worketh all things after the council of his own will of his own will. That is, when God purposed to do something, he didn't have to consult with a number of other people as to whether it was should be done or shouldn't be done. He works everything after the council of his own will. And here in Genesis chapter one, we have the simple. Precious statement. He made the stars. Also. You look up into the sky at night and you see millions of stars. Untold numbers of stars. They cannot be measured, but each one of those stars was the result of a sovereign act of God. He made the stars. The Lord Jesus was the one who actually as the second person. As the one who was the one to carry out that will, who literally made them. But the fact remains, it was a sovereign act of God. He made the stars. Now you sit here in this room tonight and you're a child of God. By wondrous grace, you're a child of God. You belong to Christ. I trust that's true of everyone here. And it is a marvelous thing to look back and perhaps even be able to pick the day. Some of us can't do it, but some perhaps can pick the day, even the hour when they accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. And they rejoiced to be able to say on such and such a date, I was there, and I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior. But there may be others here in this room who have to say, I don't know the day. I can't pick a day or an hour. I can't pick a particular moment. Some of us are like Bartimaeus. We have to say, all I can say is I was blind and now I see. But I don't know exactly when it took place. But thank God I'm a child of God tonight. But what is true of every one of us, whether we can name the day or the hour or not? We are Christians. We belong to Christ tonight. As a result of a sovereign act of God, He made the stars. And he made you and I children of God. He had to do it. We followed it through. It's not my thought to go through it tonight, But if we were to go back in the Word of God, we would find that the Word of God takes us back to God's exercise of the sovereignty of God in choosing you and I, choosing us by grace. And we sit here tonight. We belong to Christ as those who are chosen. In Christ before the foundation of the world. When it became a matter of hearing the gospel, the word of God says. He called us when it was a question of faith. He gave us the faith. It is the gift of God. I was present at a meeting some years ago in Pine Grove. And there was a man came to the gospel that night, and then the gospel meeting was over. He had taken strong exception to something that brother had said. The brother had been commenting on the verse in Ephesians chapter 2 where it says by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. Well, he, this man, this brother, and the Lord took exception to this. And when the meeting was over, he immediately came over to me because I, I knew him personally. He came over to me and he said, it's my faith, it's my faith. I have to have faith, it's my faith. And so I said to him, his name was Bill. I said to him, Bill, you know, I said, it's a wonderful thing. But when you and I to get home to glory. And we're in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Everyone else in heaven is

going to be able to thank the Lord Jesus for doing everything. And you're going to be able to tell the Lord Jesus that you were the one who figured it out for yourself. That the faith was yours.

He looked at me and all he did was nod his head. Brethren, the truth of God will always give all the glory to Christ. All the glory, Not some of it, not most of it, but all the glory to Christ and make absolutely nothing. Of man, nothing of man. In the second chapter of Isaiah we have that precious verse that says the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. The Lord alone will be exalted in that day. Now here in the first chapter of Genesis, we have this precious thing so simply stated. He made the stars also. Are you a child of God? He made you one. Do you belong to Christ tonight? It's a result of the work of God. He chose you. He worked by grace. Now in no way, and that's not what I have before me tonight, but in no way does that change man's responsibility. The word of God says whosoever will may come that stands. You know, you and I look at a railroad track. Perhaps you've done this. You stand on the in the middle of a railroad track and you look down that railroad. Track. And you look and you look and you are positive that down at the end of that railroad track, those two tracks come together. But you know they don't. You know they don't, but they look that way. Why do they look that way? Because your eyesight is defective. You can't see far enough down the track. Well, we so often look at what is God's sovereignty, his sovereign will, and then we look at man's responsibility and we stand there in the middle of those two tracks and we say they've got to cross somewhere down there ahead of us. But they don't, they never do. They run parallel, side by side, both equally true. Here we have. A precious, precious truth for our own hearts. That settles forever any question, for instance, of eternal security for the believer. He made the stars. He made the stars. You and I are stars. We are able to shine here in this world as a light in The Dark World, in the night season. But he made the stars. We had nothing to do with it. Now would you turn to the 147th Psalm for more? The 147th Psalm and the fourth verse. He telleth the number of the stars. He calleth the mall. By their names. Now some months ago as a matter of fact, I was reading an article and it was referring to some old scientific. Writings, and if I remember rightly, I think it was Copernicus. Who was the one who came out with a star chart back around the year? 30 or 40 AD, Somewhere back in that area anyway, right around the time when the Lord Jesus was here. And if I remember rightly, he was the one who came out with the chart who said in his chart that he had counted them and proven conclusively that there was something like 1128 stars. And then this article went on to point out how that approximately 40 years later, I think it was another learned scientist came out and said Mr. Copernicus was all wrong. They had recounted them and there was 1198 stars, not 1148 stars. Now we come today and we know. That we don't know. That man looks up into the heavens and further he sees the more stars there are. He now talks about galaxies, millions and millions of galaxies which are made-up of hundreds of millions of stars. And he looks and he says I can't tell. Man is incapable of measuring what is finite. Remember that man is incapable. It's God's way of testifying. To the inability of man to measure what is infinite. Because he can't measure what is finite, he cannot look and tell the number of the stars. But the word of God tells us that there is a number. It is not a limitless creation. He telleth the number of the stars.

He calleth the mall by their names. As you know, in science today, they don't even try to name the stars. Most of them are simply given a number on a star chart. But the Lord Jesus has a name for every star. He knows the number of them, and he knows their names. Beloved brethren, here is again the most precious picture of you and I, the children of God. He knows how many Saints of God, how many true children of God are there in the city of Vancouver? You don't know, and neither do I. But he knows the number. He knows the number of the stars. He calleth them all by their names. You remember in the 10th chapter of John where it says he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out? Isn't it a lovely thing to sit here tonight and realize that you're not just a number, that in all that vast family of God, you're just not number 1,150,000? You're one who is known by name, one who is so infinitely precious. You are one of the stars made a star by himself. And. You're known by name, and we look at this world today and we say, are there a million Christians? Are there 2,000,010 million, 100 million? We don't know, but he knows, and each one infinitely precious, known by name. And so it is brethren. I look back in my life and I thank God tonight He made me a star. I look at my life tonight as I stand here and I rejoice to know He knows my name. He has called me by name. There is a personal relationship between the Lord Jesus and myself, signified in His knowing my name, calling me by name. Now let's turn over. To First Corinthians chapter 15. First Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 40. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars for one star different from another star in glory. Now, brethren, this has been written for a very real lesson to us. This is written in connection with resurrection. You know, as you and I sit here tonight, I can say to you on the authority, the word of God, that there is not one spiritual blessing that you have that I don't have. Nor is there one spiritual blessing that I have that you don't have, because God has given each of us every spiritual blessing in heavenly places. We all have them all. That's the way God works. Blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. How many times have you read in the book of the Psalms such words as the Lord shall bless us, or such words as God bless us? But when we come to Christianity, what do we read? God hath blessed us. With every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, how rich we are, Beloved brethren, we have everything, every blessing that the heart of God could think of, and we're just waiting to enter into our home, the Father's house. But what we find here in first Corinthians 15 is a reminder. That one star differeth from another star in glory. That is, beloved brethren, that when we get home to glory, there's going to be a sorting out. There is going to be such a thing as the judgment seat of Christ. We were talking, some of us tonight at supper time, about the verse where it speaks about he that loveth his life shall lose it. There is such a thing, beloved brethren, as a saved soul, but a lost life.

That is the life that has been lived for self, the life that has been lived for our own pleasure. The man who loves his life, he says, this is my life to live as I see fit for my own pleasure. The Lord says you leave, you live your life that way and you'll lose it because at the judgment seat of Christ where every believer will stand. Not to be judged for his sins, but to have his works reviewed. Their beloved brethren, everything that has been for self will be burned up. Everything that has been for Christ will be rewarded. And in the Kingdom it will be on display. One star will differ from another star in glory. All brethren, what a what a bright star the apostle Paul is going to be. That dear man of God who gave up everything for Christ, has it been worthwhile? All, beloved brethren, we're going to see when the Lord Jesus rewards that has been for himself. The result is going to be one star differing from another star in glory. Now it's all going to be to the praise of his glory. Our old brother Kohler years ago used to say people say we shouldn't be occupied with crowns. Well, that dear old brother said. I don't agree with that, He said I want all the crowns I can get. Because he said the more crowns I have, the more I'll have to cast at his feet. So that's what I want him for, to cast him at his feet. Well, beloved brethren, there is going to be a difference. Will everyone of us, members of the body of Christ, we will be part of that bride, but rewards are connected with the Kingdom. And in that day of glory, one star will differ from another star in glory. So when I look back, when I look at the thought of stars as individuals, I look back and I thank God He made the stars. He made the stars. There's no question of me ever being lost. He made me a star. When I look at the present, I say thank God He knows my name, individually known and precious to Himself. Every believer. And when I look at the future, there's a reminder. That one star will differ from another star in glory. I may have told this story before, but I remember so well years ago I was still in high school. And I was really perplexed. One day there was an

exam coming up. And I was going to have to write this examination on a certain day, and there was a meeting the night before. And I didn't know what to do. Should I stay home, study or should I go to meeting? And I asked the brother, a dear brother that I highly esteemed in the Lord for some counsel. What do you do on a circumstance like that? And you know, the only counsel he would give me, he wouldn't tell me what to do. All he said was he said brother, he said you just act the way you want the record to read at the judgment seat of Christ, because you that that's how to act. Just act the way you want the record to read at the judgment seat of Christ. But you know, that's settled it that that that eliminated the difficulty right away. How did I want the record to read? One star will differ from another star in glory. Now I'd like you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 2. Matthew chapter 2 and verse one. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea and the days of Herod the King. Behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East and are come to worship him. When Herod the King had heard these things, he was troubled in all Jerusalem with him, and when he had gathered all the chief priests and the scribes of the people together. He demanded of them where Christ should be born, and they said unto him in Bethlehem of Judea. For thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the Princess of Judah. For out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise man, inquired of them diligently. What time the star appeared and he sent them to Bethlehem and said go and search diligently for the young child.

And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also. When they had heard the king, they departed. And lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came, and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, his mother. And fell down and worshiped him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense and myrrh. Now, brethren, we often hear, or we have heard perhaps I should say, in the popular stories that are given in Christendom of how that star led the wise men from the East to Jerusalem. But that is not what the Word of God says. What we find is that the star appeared to the wise man in the East. And that star in its appearing in a way that is not explained to us in the word of God, communicated to those wise men something concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. If I asked you how did they know that that star meant the King of the Jews had been born, you would have to say we don't know. God hasn't revealed it to us, but the. Communicated that truth to them, and they started out with this conviction. The King of the Jews has been born. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him. And beloved brethren, one of the primary functions of the Spirit of God. Is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, to make known the person and the work of Christ. What a marvelous testimony this was to these wise men. Something concerning that person he had been born. And who he was the king of the Jews. And so it is today, beloved brethren, the Spirit of God is today. Bearing witness to this world, who the Lord Jesus is and what He has done. The wonderful facts, the wonderful truth concerning his coming, concerning his death, concerning his resurrection. Concerning the power of that resurrection, concerning the results of that resurrection, concerning the value of the precious blood of Christ, this is the testimony of the Spirit of God to this world. So we find that the star, its function, first brought before us a testimony to who it was. And what had happened concerning him? The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews, had been born into this world. But then we notice a striking thing, and what to my own soul, is a very searching thing. Where did the wise men go? The wise men went to Jerusalem. Now the star did not lead them to Jerusalem. They said we saw the star in the East. And that star's appearance convey the truth to them. The king of the Jews had been born. But it wasn't the star that brought them to Jerusalem. It was what we might call human wisdom that brought them to Jerusalem. Because you see, beloved brethren, the Word of God. Said Bethlehem. Human wisdom, said Jerusalem. And so the wise men start off on their journey, and they go to Jerusalem, and at Jerusalem they ask, where is he that is born king of the Jews? Now when the question is put to the scribes and the Pharisees, and the fifth verse, it says, They said unto him in Bethlehem of Judea.

The word of God said Bethlehem, 12 miles approximately South of Jerusalem. That was where he was to be born. And the Herod tells the wise man that it's Bethlehem. They start out for Bethlehem. Notice. The eighth verse he sent them to Bethlehem and said, go and search diligently for the young child. And when you have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed. And lo, the star which they saw in the East. Went before them. Here's the star again. Now, brethren, why is it so? This is, I believe in my own soul, most important principle that the Word of God is bringing before us, and that is simply this. The Spirit of God never leads contrary to the Word of God. Never. The Spirit of God and the Word of God must be in harmony. Must be in harmony. Was that the star could appear in the east and convey that wonderful truth. The king of the Jews has been born, but the star couldn't lead to Jerusalem when the word of God said go to Bethlehem. It was impossible. But once the word of God had been listened to but once. The Word of God had been listened to once. The Word of God had been heard. It's in Bethlehem. They start off for Bethlehem. Now the star goes before them. The star goes before them. This wonderful picture, their type of the Spirit of God can lead according to the Word, but never contrary to the Word, never contrary to the Word. And beloved brethren, I say this to my own soul. But let us always be conscious of the fact that the Spirit of God cannot, because He is the Spirit of God, cannot, lead contrary to the revealed mind of God in the Word. When someone says I believe the Spirit of God led me and the word of God condemns what they did. You know that the Spirit of God didn't lead them at all. Human wisdom LED them. Their own desires LED them. The inclinations of their own heart LED them. Whatever it is, the apostle Paul had a wonderful motive. He loved the Jews, and he wanted to see the blessing of God brought to the Jews. So he went to Jerusalem. But the Spirit of God said not to. But he went anyway. He went anyway. Now God in his grace overruled. So that Paul ended up in the place where God wanted him in Rome as a prisoner and what God wanted to accomplish was accomplished in God's over ruling way. But all what a rough Rd. Paul had to follow the lessons that Paul had to learn as he sat for those two years in that jail in Caesarea. Because his own desires took him to Jerusalem when the Spirit of God. Had directed him to go to Rome. Now what we find here is that these wise men, acting on what the word of God said to go to Bethlehem, are now led by the Spirit, led by the star. And so it is, brethren, the function of the Spirit of God to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is. And what he has done, the Spirit of God to act direct, lead in accordance with the word of God. And brethren, I cannot emphasize to your soul or to mine how important this is. We hear so much today. I believe the Lord wanted me to do this, but no effort made to search the word. Is it according to the Word? Is it according to the word? How often I've said to the young people back home that once the word of God has spoken. About something, you shouldn't even pray about it. Unless it's to ask the Lord for grace to be obedient. To have someone say I'm engaged to an unsaved boy or an unsaved young lady. And I'm praying about whether I should marry them when the word of God says be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, should they pray about it?

No, they shouldn't pray about it all. They should bow to what the word of God says because God never leads contrary to His Word. The Spirit of God never leads in a path that is opposed to His Word. The star could only lead them. When they were going by the word of God. Lastly, you'll find. The end of the ninth verse. Which they saw in the east, The star which they saw in the east went before them till it came, and

stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child would marry his mother, and fell down and worshiped him. Brethren, the third function. Of the Spirit of God is to gather to Christ. To lead to him. You know, I have thought about this person, meditate down, as I'm sure others have. I've even tried it. I don't. Perhaps others have tried it too. But if you've ever stood outside, outside, especially in the country on a very dark, on a night where there's no moon but lots of stars. And you stand out there in the country and you look up at the sky full of stars and you stand there and you say to yourself, which one is directly over me? Which one am I directly under? And if it's a good bright night with a lot of stars, it's impossible. You look as I can't tell which one. Any number of those stars could be directly over me. But these ones, these wise men, the Star LED them, it says, till it came and stood over where the young child was. To me, that's so precious. Oh, you say, you mean it LED them to East Vancouver or you say, no, it LED them to such and such a house. It LED them to a person. It led them to a person where the young child was. And when they went into the house. They worshiped Him, they saw the young child with Mary's mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. All beloved brethren, have you and I seen that star, the Spirit of God? According to the word of God, that word of God in the Spirit of God, acting in harmony. And Luke 22, the picture, the picture that's given to us, is the man bearing the picture of water. And where does he lead? He leads to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he stands right over that person. They weren't attracted to Bethlehem, they weren't attracted to the house. They were attracted to the person. And what they had to offer, they didn't offer to the house, they offered to the person. They opened up their treasures and offered to him. Gold and frankincense and myrrh. Now would you turn with me? To the Burke, Second Peter, Chapter one. The 16th verse, for we have not followed that second Peter one and verse 16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the Holy Mountain. We have also a more sure word of prophecy. Now if you have a margin in your Bible as I have for instance, the way the margin in my Bible reads is this for that 1St 19. And we have the word of prophecy confirmed or made sure, we have also a more sure word of prophecy. Where unto ye do well, that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts. Now, the word that's translated here, day star, is exactly the same word that's translated in the Book of Revelation. The Morning star, the Day star and the Morning Star are the same thing. The same star. And what we have here in Second Peter one is, as you know, a reference to the Mount of Transfiguration.

That is Peter and James and John stood on that mount of Transfiguration, and what he says is that standing there and looking at the Lord Jesus transfigured before them, as they saw his face white and glistening, as they saw his rope shining, as they saw that display of glory. They had the prophetic word confirmed to them. It's what you and I might call a preview. They had a preview of the Kingdom. So they said what we have already knew from the prophetic word. We had it confirmed to us because we've already seen it. And that's why, if you remember, in each one of the Gospels, in the 17th of Matthew, in the ninth of Mark and in the ninth of Luke. The three Gospel accounts of the Mount of Transfiguration. Each one of them is introduced by those words of the Lord Jesus. There be some standing here that shall not taste of death until they see the Kingdom come in power. That is, that they were not going to die until they'd been up on that mount of Transfiguration. And had seen a preview of that Kingdom. In power and glory. Well, here in two Peter chapter one, what the Peter is saying is that he's had this prophetic word. Confirmed to them by seeing that display of glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. We have also that word made sure, a prophetic word made sure. Where unto ye do well that ye take heed. As unto a light that China thin a dark place until the day dawn. Brethren, prophecy is good. Prophecy is part of the Word of God. Prophecy is given to us to be intelligent about. And so he says it is. Well, it's a light that shines in a dark place. And so it is as we see this world getting darker, as we see it all the corruption and misery in this world, as we seek corruption in high places, as we see moral issues being. Laughed at today, Mocked at as we see the Word of God set aside, as we see violence increasing on every hand, as we see men's hearts failing them for fear. It's a dark scene. Aren't you glad for the prophetic word that lets you know what the end is going to be? That lets you know that the Lord Jesus is going to reign in power, that Satan is going to be defeated. That righteousness will reign one day in this world. That there will one day be a new heavens and a new earth where indwells righteousness. Oh, it's well to take heed to the prophecy. It's a light that shines in a dark place until that day dawns. But then he says, but there's something better. There's something more precious, something that he would value much more highly. He says I'm the morning star or day star. I rise in your hearts. Brethren, is that morning star? Is it rising? Is it shining? And all its wonderful light in my heart? Is the precious truth of the Lord's coming a real present hope for me? If it isn't, don't talk about the day star shining or arising in your hearts. What you if, if you and I say, well, now someday? I had a lady come to the meeting at Pine Grove just a little while ago, a visitor, and we got talking to her after I found out she was a child of God. And when we. Chatted with her for a little while. We got talking about the Lord's coming. She said, oh, that's years off that, that's years off. Another lady come to our house and I got talking to her and finally she was a dear child of God. She loved the Lord Jesus. When I got talking to her about the Lord's coming, she said, oh that that could be a long, long, long way off. Could we just take a moment to go back to the book of Ezekiel for a moment? 16th chapter. I'm sorry, I it's the 12Th chapter, Ezekiel chapter 12. I just like to read a little portion here. Beginning with the 21St verse of Ezekiel chapter 12. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel? Saying the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth tell them therefore thus saith the Lord God. I will make this proverb to cease, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel, but say unto them, The days are at hand, and the effect of every vision. For there shall be no more any vain vision, nor flattering divination within the House of Israel. For I am the Lord, I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass. It shall be no more prolonged, for in your days no rebellious house will I say the word, and will performance at the Lord God.

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of Man, behold, they of the House of Israel say the vision that he seeth. Is for many days to come, and he prophesied of the times that are far off. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, there shall none of my words be prolonged anymore. But the word which I have spoken shall be done, said the Lord God. And what this has particular reference to is the destruction of Jerusalem. And there were those who were prophesying that that destruction was about to come. But there were those in Israel who were saying. Every vision fails. People are always talking about that Jerusalem is going to be destroyed. They're always talking, but it never happens. It never happens. The Lord says it's going to happen and it's going to happen in your days. But then he says that there are other prophets, there are other people in Israel who are saying, oh, we know about that vision, but that's for years off. Someday perhaps, but that's years off. It says the vision that he seeth is for many days to come. The Lord says not so, not so. There shall none of my words be prolonged. Anymore and it came. The destruction that the Lord spoke of came. Jerusalem was destroyed and both the prophets, both the types of prophets, those who said it would never come, and those who said it was a long way off. Were proven to be false prophets. What we find here in Second Peter chapter one is the reminder that what the Lord is looking for is the day star arising in our hearts. To have you go home tonight, to have me go home tonight with the sense in my soul the Lord is coming and I'm looking for Him tonight. Tonight, not waiting and watching for something that's going to happen 50 years from now or 25 years from now or five years from now. No, the Day Star rising in

my heart tonight. Tonight we're looking for the Lord. Tonight we're looking for him to come at any moment. The Morning Star, the day stars had spoken of here are rising in your heart. And brethren, that's far more important than any amount of prophecy. Prophecy signs are connected with the Earth. But the day started rising in the heart. Is connected with the man in the glory, the longing for him to come, the heart taken up with himself. Enjoying his promise, Behold, I come quickly. Nothing here connected with testimony, nothing here connected with anything else except the hearts response, the daystar arising, and your heart. Now would you turn with me to Revelation Chapter? 3 Revelation Chapter 2. Sorry, Revelation Chapter 2. And verse 24. But unto you, I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan as they speak. I will put upon you none other burden but that which ye have already. Hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to Him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a Potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Now. The last four churches from thy Tyra. The one we just read on to the end. The last four churches. In this account, outline of the Church's history in this world go on to the end. The Lord's coming is connected with each one of them. And there is a change when we come to the 4th church, the one we just read, and that is that God is no longer looking for the hearing ear in the church as a whole, but he's looking for the hearing ear in the overcomer. It's to the overcomer that he then says he that hath an ear to hear, let him hear. But what we do find is that in connection with Thyatira, the Morning Star is introduced again.

And it's introduced in connection with. Holding fast. You notice it says in that 24th verse, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan. As I speak, I will put upon you none other burden but that which ye have already. Hold fast till I come. Oh brethren, let's look at things. Just out you look at things in Vancouver. You say to yourself, can can we, can we go on? Will, will there be a testimony in Vancouver 25 years from now? Oh, brethren, we don't have to be concerned with what's going to be here 25 years from now. The Lord is coming, The Lord is coming. He says, Hold fast till I come, till I come. You know, it just struck me just a little while ago I heard of a dear St. of God who? Left the Lord's Table, just got discouraged and despondent and left the Lord's Table. And the thought that struck my soul as soon as I heard it, it's one that I'd known and and cared for deeply. And the thought that struck my soul the moment I heard of it. Giving up. And this close to home. This close to home, here's what we have here. The Morning Star. Given as the encouragement to the overcomer. Given as the encouragement. Hold fast till I come. Do we have to hold fast for one more week? One more day, one more hour old brethren, isn't it wonderful you think of some dear St. of God tonight? Who's in a prison in Russia? And he comes before a judge in that nation of Russia, and he hears the judge stand up there, sit on his seat there in Russia. And he says, you're sentenced to Siberia for 99 years. What does he say? Does he go saying I've got 99 years of this to go through? No, brethren, He hears that voice, I trust. Hears that. Hold fast till I come. Till I come. You know. I thought of it in connection with Enochs. I'm sure others have too. You know. Enoch, if he had gone by precedent. Enoch lived in a world that the Word of God tells us was filled with corruption and violence. It was a world that God was going to overthrow with a flood. And if Enoch went by precedent. He would have said. I've got 500 more years of this to go through. His father, his grandfather, his great grandfather had all lived to be 900 years old or better. And he was only 365 years of old age. And if he had gone by precedent, he would have said look at look at the world and the condition and how much more I've got to go through. But the word of God says he walked with God, and he was not forgotten. God took him. He didn't have 900 years to go through. The time had come for the Lord to take him. And so it is, brethren, here, the encouragement that's given in Peter, the thought is particularly the day star arising in your hearts, the heart simply taken up with himself. He's coming for us here in Revelation chapter 2. It's an encouragement to hold fast till He comes. The Morning Star all when I hear Saints of God talking about the Lord's coming as if it's years away. Is that any encouragement to hold fast? It's not the way God puts it to us. He's like having our hearts looking for His coming tonight and realizing that all I've got to do is hold fast by His grace for the moments that are left. Before we enter the Father's house now, I'd like to turn your, pardon me, just going a few minutes overtime. One last verse, Revelation chapter 22. Revelation chapter 22 and verse 16. I, Jesus have sent mine Angel, to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say come. And him that here and let him that heareth say, Come and let him that is a thirst. Come and whosoever will let him take the water of life.

Freely the 20th verse he which testified these things. Seth, surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Now here we have the third instance of the Lord Jesus spoken of as the bright. A morning star. And here it is given particularly in connection with testimony. You notice it says, I, Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning Star. And then it says, and the Spirit and the bride. Say come. Now, brethren, the Lord Jesus is the one who speaks of Himself as the Morning Star. That light that shines before the dawn, the Lord Jesus will come in judgment and in blessing to this world as the Son of righteousness who rises with healing in his wings. But for us before that, he comes as the morning star. He's the light that comes and shines at the darkest part of the night. But what we have here is a testimony. And what is that testimony? The Lord Jesus saying I'm the bright and morning star and the Spirit. Says come. The testimony of the Spirit. The response of the Spirit of God. To the one who says he's the bright morning star is come and the bride. In harmony with the thoughts of the Spirit. Also says come. Not come next week or next month or next year. Not come when things that I want to do are over and done with. But come. The Spirit says come and the bride says come. And what's the result of the testimony of the Spirit and of the Bride? In harmony, IN response to the voice of the One who's the brightened Morning Star. What's the result of their testimony? It says, And he let him that heareth. Say come, come. All beloved brethren, it's such a lovely thing to think that you tonight, that you and I tonight have the privilege of encouraging by our own testimony in harmony with the thoughts of the Spirit of God, encouraging other Saints of God to say come to, to be looking and longing for his coming also. So it says, he let him that heareth. Say come. Have you had the joy of bringing before a Saint of God the precious truth of the Lord's coming? And have them lay hold of it and rejoice in it, and thank God for the opening up of that truth to them, that the Lord is coming at any moment. That's what we have here. The Spirit and the Bride say come, and he that hears says come. And then it says and let him that is athirst come. Now this is one who is not saved, one who needs to Savior, and the result, the heart then says at the thought of his coming, the Spirit and the Bride in harmony. The effect on other believers is that they are led to say come also and then the heart goes out to those that are lost. And it says let him that is athirst come. Brethren, the enjoyment, and let us always be conscious of this. The enjoyment of the truth of God enjoyed in communion in the soul will only deepen love for souls. It will never weaken it. It will never give us to have less interest in the Gospel. Know that joyment of the truth of God will give us as it is here, as we're occupied with His coming. The heart cannot help. If the Lord's coming is a reality in my soul tonight, that can't help but be a love for souls, a desire to save. Let whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. We come to the end of the chapter. The Lord Jesus says, surely I come quickly. Now, brethren, I trust you understand what I mean when I say this. It is never the place for the child of God to tell the Lord Jesus what to do.

The Lord Jesus says I come quickly. The response is not come quickly. But just entering into His spots, it would never do for us to tell the Lord when to come, but we can respond to His statement. Behold, I come quickly. Our hearts say, Even so, come, Lord Jesus, we want Him to come. He knows the best time the God our Father has appointed that day. He waits for that time. We wait for it. In the meantime, brethren, we rejoice to know that He made us stars, to know that He calls us by name and cares for us as those who are precious to Himself. That there is a day coming when one star will differ from another starring glory. The reminder that the Spirit of God.

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