Genesis - Commentaries by Gordon Henry Hayhoe

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 9:8-29: God’s Promises

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God promised that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood, and as a token of His promise, He has put the rainbow in the clouds. What a beautiful sight it is to see the rainbow stretching across the sky after, or during, a rainfall in the late afternoon! The sun shining on the raindrops makes all the lovely colors which we admire, and it looks so majestic in the dark clouds above us. Let us remember when we see it, that it is to tell us, as a message from God, that He never forgets His promises — no, never. He has made a great many promises in His Word to cheer the hearts of those who belong to Him. Here is one which has given assurance to many a doubting soul. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28). Could we have any better assurance than the Word of God on which to rest our souls? If you, dear reader, are trusting in the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, don’t allow Satan to put a doubt in your mind as to your eternal security.

Judgment on the Earth

Although the earth will not be destroyed by water again, God has told us that it will be destroyed by fire the next time. “The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:10). The world is guiltier now than in the days of Noah, because it has crucified the Son of God, but in longsuffering patience God is still waiting for boys and girls, and men and women, to accept Christ as their Saviour before the judgment falls. Dear young reader, are you saved? Now is God’s time. Tomorrow may be too late, for the Lord Jesus is coming very soon, and then the door of grace will be closed forever.

Noah’s Failure

We now come to a very sad page in Noah’s life, which should be a warning to us. None of us ever come to a point in our Christian life when we can settle down and say we are out of danger. No, the great enemy of our souls, Satan, is always busy seeking to trip us up, and lead us into paths of sin.

Noah planted a vineyard. There was nothing wrong in this, but the wrong came in when he used the fruit of it for a bad purpose. It is quite right for us to be engaged in our school work, or in business, but let us be careful that we do not let these things get such a hold on us, that they rob us of our joy in the Lord. So it was with Noah, for he became drunk with the wine of his vineyard, to his shame and disgrace before his sons, but how much more before God. Now we all know it is very wrong to be drunk with wine, but if we allow anything to fill our minds and hearts so that we have no time for the Lord’s things, it can make us “drunk” too.

What a beautiful example of “love covering a multitude of sins” is seen in the action of Shem and Japheth. When they heard of their father’s sin, they covered his nakedness, instead of talking about it as Ham did. Let us treat the failure of others in this way, and pray for them. God has graciously forgiven all our sins, and we are to show the same grace to our brethren.

1. What did God give as a token of His promise never to destroy the earth with a flood again?

2. God has always been faithful to His promises. What promises did He make to Abraham? How are we shown by Scripture that God has kept them?

3. You might find it encouraging to read The Bible Promise Book edited by K. Abraham. It presents sets of Scriptures organized into 67 important themes. Our faith is fed by meditating on God’s faithfulness.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 9:1-7: His Goodness and Blessing

Judgment is God’s “strange work,” for He delights in blessing. Noah and his family were saved from the terrible waters of the flood by taking shelter in the ark, and now we read these beautiful words, “And God blessed Noah and his sons.”

No doubt many of our readers can say they are “saved” because they have put their trust in the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour. What a grand thing this is! But, dear young folks, do you want His blessing in your life? Of course you do, for “the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22). The only way to have His blessing is to walk in obedience to His Word. Many dear Christians have a great deal of sorrow in their lives because they walk in paths of their own choosing. Ask the Lord to help you to please Him day by day, and you will have a happy, useful life with His blessing.

Mankind and Animals

God has put the fear of mankind upon all the animals, birds, fishes, and creeping things. He has enabled men to tame many such animals as the horse, the mule, and the camel, and make them very useful servants, whereas there are many wild animals which, even though tamed, will not serve us. In spite of man’s sinfulness, and even hatred of God, He has given us abundant proof of His goodness, and of His care for His creatures. “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalms 107:21). Let us remember to thank Him for His many blessings to us.

God told Noah that “every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.” There are some who say that it is wrong to eat meat, but God’s word assures us that we can eat and enjoy it. “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Timothy 4:4). We must not forget, however, that it is wrong to eat blood, (Genesis 9:4) and this command is repeated in the New Testament (Acts 15:29). The life is in the blood, and the shedding of the animal’s blood should tell us that life for us is through death. We were dead in sins, but the Lord Jesus has died for us, shedding His own precious blood, that we might live through Him.

The Prince of Life a Substitute for Sinners

When any man killed another, he himself was to be put to death. He was a murderer. Now this world has murdered the Son of God, and must answer to God for it. Peter brought this fact before the Jews in Jerusalem. He said, “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life” (Acts 3:14-15).

Dear young reader, you have your part in that awful act if you are still rejecting Him in your heart. You are just as guilty before God as the men who cried “Away with Him,” unless you have owned your guilt before God, and taken His Son as your Saviour. Death, and after death, judgment, are before you at this very moment, unless you have a Substitute, whom you can say has died in your place. Wonder of wonders, the One whom we murdered, Jesus the Son of God, died as a Substitute for sinners! Can you say, “He died for me”?

1. Why is it wrong to eat blood?

2. There is a mention later in the book of Genesis when the Lord Jesus ate meat. Can you find it? You won’t find His name in the verse, but Hebrews 13:2 should give you the hint you need to find the story in Genesis.

3. You might enjoy a simple little article from Wonders of God’s Creation: Volume 1 by S. R. Gill entitled “What Happens When We Eat?” We are certainly fearfully and wonderfully made.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 6:14-22: Instruction for Safety

Noah was not left to make his own plans for the ark which God told him to build. God gave him all the instructions he needed as to the size, the number of stories, and also that it was to have only one window and one door. In fact God even told him what kind of wood to use, as well as about the pitch with which he was to cover it within and without. Many people try to make their own plans for salvation, such as good works, prayers, going to church, and many other ways which they think are good enough. But they do not want to come in God’s way. The Lord Jesus Christ and His work are the only “ark” of safety from coming judgment.

The Ark

This ark was a tremendous boat, as large as the great vessels that sail the ocean today. There was room for all who would enter, but there was only one door. The only door of salvation now is the Lord Jesus who said, “I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). After they entered there was only one window by which they could look out, and it was in the top so they could look up. Some of our readers know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and there is a lesson for us here. In all our difficulties and trials, let us learn to look up to the Lord in prayer. He is able and willing to help us in every time of need.

The wood and the black pitch would remind us of how the Lord Jesus died on the cross for us, and so whether we looked at the ark from the inside or outside, we would think of the Lord Jesus going through death, in order that we might be saved. Noah was to bring all kinds of food into the ark, and we who are “safe in Christ,” find the food that is necessary for our new nature in the Bible. This is why we should read the Word each day, to make us “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

Unsaved Helpers

Perhaps in building this great ark Noah had the help of some others who did not come into it when the flood came. They might have been good carpenters, and willing helpers, but the ark would not do them any good unless they took shelter inside. There are many boys and girls who are much like this. They come regularly to Sunday School, and even help in it by giving out the hymn books, and doing other things, but they have never accepted the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour. They can tell all about Him, and even tell others how to be saved, but like Noah’s helpers, they refuse to come to Christ themselves. Are you one of these helpers who cannot say you are saved yourself? The Lord Jesus is waiting to save you, but if you put it off, you may find yourself outside the door, and there will not be any way of escape for you then. God’s judgments will fall on you, and you will have to spend eternity in outer darkness, away from God forever.

1. What do the wood and black pitch used to build the ark remind us of?

2. There are several different types of arks mentioned in the Bible. Besides Noah’s ark, what other arks can you think of? What do each of them represent?

3. You might enjoy handing out the gospel tract Noah’s Carpenters that presents the warning mentioned in this meditation.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 6:1-13: Warning and Provision

We did not have a chapter on the fifth chapter, because it is mostly names. However we might just say this: when you are reading your Bible each day, as we hope you do, you should always take time to read over these names. God has put them down in His Word for a purpose, and it shows us that He knows our names, and that He takes notice of little things in our lives. Among all the others, He tells us that “Enoch walked with God.” That is, Enoch lived to please God, and instead of dying as all the others did, God took him to heaven without death. This reminds us of the time when the Lord Jesus will come (it is very soon!), and He will take all those who are trusting in Him, up to heaven

without death (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Are you ready for that moment?

Wickedness of Man Great in the Earth

Men and women had been living on the earth for over one thousand five hundred years, and instead of getting any better, they were becoming worse and worse. God looked down, and He has told us just how bad things really were. He saw “that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Your heart and mine are just as bad as this, and there is only one thing that can cleanse them. It is the precious blood of Christ.

“And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” God was patient for many years, and the time was drawing near when He must act in judgment. Dear young reader, are you saved? Do not trifle with His goodness any longer, lest He should have to say that His Spirit would not strive with you anymore. What a solemn thing that would be! If your sins are troubling you now, it is because God’s Spirit is striving to bring you to the knowledge of Christ as your own precious Saviour. Open your heart to the Lord Jesus today and you will be saved. Tomorrow may be too late.

Warnings of Destruction

God said that He would destroy the earth with a flood of water. All the fine things, with the harps and the organs of Cain’s city, and all the places of pleasure, with the great men who had built them, were to be buried under the waters of the flood. Judgment was written on them all. But there was one man who had faith. It was Noah. He walked with God, and he believed God. God told Noah to build an ark to shelter himself and all who would enter it from the coming storm, and he did exactly as God told him.

Noah did not follow the crowd, or he, too, would have perished in the flood. I suppose the others told him he was foolish, but he did not listen to them, for he believed God. He preached and warned them, but they would not listen to his message, and the only ones who entered the ark with him were seven others of his own family. Dear young reader, don’t follow the crowd. They may laugh at you in school, and tell you that you should have a good time with them, but don’t forget that the crowd are going down the broad road to judgment.

1. Why did God decide to destroy the earth?

2. Noah resisted what you might call peer pressure. All those around him were opposed to what God had to say. How did Daniel do the same thing?

3. Living in a godly way when others are opposed to godliness is a real challenge. You might find the pamphlet The Blessedness of Godliness: A Meditation on Psalm 1 by G. V. Wigram an encouragement to you if you have a desire to resist evil and follow holiness.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 50:20-26: Promises of Blessing

Joseph’s brothers fell down before him and said, “Behold we be thy servants.” Such an expression is natural to one who does not know the heart of God. Mephibosheth said this to David, and the prodigal planned to say it to his father when he returned home; how many today are coming to God in this way, as though the attempt to serve God would bring them into His favor. Mephibosheth was not received as a servant, but “as one of the king’s sons,” and the prodigal was given the best robe, the ring, the shoes, and above all, the welcome, not of a servant, but of a son. And so here, Joseph did not deal with his brothers as servants, but said, “I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them.” We must be in God’s family before we can serve Him in a way that pleases Him, and then our service is not one of bondage, but of love. The way to get into God’s family is by new birth — by accepting Christ as one’s own personal Saviour (Galatians 3:26). Dear reader, have you done this? Until you do, all your service is useless, yes, even hateful to God, because it is not a service of faith or love, and His Word says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).

Harm Turned to Blessing

Joseph then told his brothers that although they thought to harm him, God had turned it into blessing. We know, too, that this world did all the harm they could to Jesus, the Son of God, but God has turned their wicked act of crucifying Him into the foundation of all blessing to fallen man. Joseph was able to save many people alive for a few short years, but Christ’s finished work has brought eternal life to all who believe on Him — blessed Saviour!

At last Joseph died — and he died in faith, assuring his brothers that God was going to fulfill His oft-repeated promises of blessing. When the children of Israel were brought back to Canaan about four hundred years later, Joseph’s bones were taken and buried there to await the glorious resurrection morn, though Joseph knew very little of it then, but it is now very near — “The coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8).

God’s Grace and Blessing

We have now come to the end of this interesting book of Genesis, and will just make a few remarks in closing. Genesis has often been spoken of as the seed plot of the Bible, because it gives us an outline, in type or figure, of all the great truths revealed in the other 65 books. It reveals the ways of God in grace with men and women, and while recording their failures, it shows us how, through that which figured the death of Christ — the coats of skins, Abel’s sacrifice, the ram caught in the thicket by his horns, and many others — God could go on with sinful man and bless him. Dear young reader; let us remind you once again of the importance of every word of God. Read it carefully and prayerfully every day of your life, and you will learn more of its living depths as the years go by.

1. What did Joseph say to his brothers after they fell down before him as his servants?

2. Looking back over the book of Genesis, how many types or figures of Christ and His work can you identify in it?

3. Though it’s a pretty long book, you might find Notes on the Pentateuch: Genesis to Deuteronomy by C. H. Mackintosh well worth your investment of time. His writings are wordy by modern standards, but the vibrant warmth for Christ and clear exposition of fundamental truths make the time spent worth it.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 4:9-26: Sin Found Out

One day when Cain was out in the field with Abel his brother, he became so angry that he killed him. What a terrible thing to do! He did not seem to realize that God was watching him, but let us remember He sees everything we do. You may be able to hide things from others, and perhaps from your parents, but you cannot hide anything from God.

And although God sees and hears everything, He loves us. He does not love our sins, but He loves us and wants to cleanse us from all our sins.

After Cain murdered his brother, the Lord asked him where Abel was. Cain replied, “I know not: am I my brother’s keeper?” This was a lie to God, for he did know where his brother was. He had killed Abel, and he tried to cover up his sin by telling a lie. Have you ever done something you knew to be wrong and then tried to cover it up by telling a lie? You often end up by telling two or three lies! When you do one wrong thing, then Satan tries to catch you in his net and lead you on in a sinful path. Only the Lord Jesus can set you free, and He will, if you come to Him telling Him “all the truth.” Here is a good verse to remember at all times, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). Don’t try to cover things up, children; confess them at once.

Cain’s Punishment

God told Cain that he was to be a fugitive and a vagabond (a wanderer) in the earth. Cain did not like the punishment, and he was very sorry about it, but not for his sin. Many people today are much like Cain. They are very sorry when they are found out, and even cry when they are punished, but they have never really repented before God. Dear young reader, have you ever taken your place as a guilty sinner before God? This is true repentance, and the moment you do this, and trust in the work the Lord Jesus has done for you, you will be saved.

Then Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and built a city. He was trying to make himself happy away from God. This is just exactly what the world is today. It has so many attractions for your young heart, to make you forget the Lord in a whirl of pleasure and excitement. In the city which Cain built, there were harps and organs and all kinds of beautiful things made from brass and iron, but let us not forget where it was. It was “out from the presence of the Lord.” It is the same world today, and Satan is its god and prince. Just as Cain’s city was later destroyed by a flood, so there is a day near at hand when this poor world will be burned up. Here are two verses for us to consider. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20).

1. What punishment did God give for Cain’s sin?

2. Why is lying such a serious thing to God? You can find one example of how God dealt with lying in Acts 5. What made the punishment so severe on that occasion.

3. You might find additional help on this story from the Audio CD Adam, Cain and Abel, Enoch and Noah: From Notes on Genesis, Genesis 3-5 by C. H. Mackintosh.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 4:1-8: Cain and Abel

God gave Adam and Eve two sons, whom they named Cain and Abel. I am sure they loved their boys, and told them of how sin came into the world by their disobedience and then of how God clothed them in the coats of skins. No doubt Cain and Abel both knew the story well, but what a great difference there was between the way they received it. Abel believed it, for he knew that he was a sinner, and he saw that the death of another must come between himself and God, or he could not be accepted. Cain was careless about it and thought that the works of his own hands were good enough to be presented to a holy God.

Fitness of Offerings

So they both brought their offerings to the Lord. Cain brought his first. It was the fruit of the ground which God had cursed, and there was no blood shed. How could God accept such an offering from Cain in his sins? He could not. Then Abel brought his offering, and what a difference! He brought “the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.” He acknowledged that death was what he deserved, but the little animal died in his place, and God accepted him and his offering.

Sometimes we hear people say that God accepted Abel because he was good, and rejected Cain because he was bad. No, boys and girls, they were both bad sinners, but Abel was accepted because his sacrifice answered to God for his sins, and pointed on to the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God. These two brothers had the same opportunities of hearing the right way. Perhaps you have a Christian father and mother who have often pointed you to Christ. Have you accepted Him as the One who died for your sins? Knowing the way will not save you. You must come yourself.

One Offering Rejected

When Cain’s offering was rejected, he was very angry. Many people today get very angry when you tell them that their own works will not fit them for the presence of God, and that they need Christ as their Saviour. They don’t like to hear about the blood of Christ. God told Cain “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?” The way was still open for him to bring a sacrifice which God could accept, but he would not. And the way is still open for you, unsaved one. “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7).

Cain was first envious of his brother, then he began to hate him, and this led to murder. Oh, boys and girls, let us be careful of envy and jealousy. If you are saved, you can ask the Lord Jesus to help you not to envy others. If you find those feelings in your heart, you should pray for the friends you envy, and ask God for grace to be specially kind to them. You will then soon get the victory and love them, but if you don't do this, you will get away from the Lord in your soul and end up by doing something very naughty.

1. Why did God accept Abel's offering and not Cain's?

2. Jealousy and anger can lead to many other sins. How was anger a major part of Saul's life? What damage did it cause?

3. The book Plain Papers For Young Believers by A. T. Schofield has a helpful chapter on the subject of anger. The article is also freely available at bibletruthlibrary.org and can be found in a library search for article number 53629.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 49:24-50:19: Unchanging and Everlasting Love

Those wonderful words, spoken to Joseph, refer to the Lord Jesus, "From thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel." He is both the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) and the Corner Stone of God's building (Ephesians 2:20). If you are unsaved, dear reader, you are like a lost sheep in the wilderness, and the Good Shepherd is seeking you. Do not run away from Him any longer, but let Him save you and put you on His mighty shoulders now. He will carry you all the way home, and you will be able to say like David of old, "The Lord is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). Then, too, you need a solid foundation on which to build, and the Lord Jesus is the Living Stone (1 Peter 2:4). Do not build on anything of your own doings, for if you do, it will all tumble in the storm which is soon going to break upon this dark world. How much better to be able to say, "On Christ the solid Rock I stand."

The Promised Blessing

The promised blessing was to go to "the utmost bound of the everlasting hills," and this looks on to the time when Christ will reign over this whole world. The blessings of His kingdom will extend beyond the land of Israel (where it will be in its fullness) to the ends of the earth. This is what we commonly call the millennium.

After blessing his twelve sons Jacob died. Joseph mourned and wept for a long time. He did not know, as we do now, that death for the believer is to be "absent from the body, present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). This was a special revelation given to Paul, and now we do not sorrow as Joseph did. We know that the sting of death is gone through the work of Christ, and that our loved ones, who have died in Christ, are with Him which is far better. (Philippians 1:23) They wait for His coming up there while we wait here, and then we, with all the Old Testament saints, will receive bodies of glory just like Christ's.

As soon as Joseph's father had died, Joseph had the Egyptians embalm his body. Then he, with a great company of others, took it up to the land of Canaan for burial as his father had requested.

Fear Not

Joseph's brothers were afraid as soon as their father had died, for they thought perhaps Joseph had only been kind to them for his father's sake, and that now he would punish them for their naughtiness. They decided to go to him, therefore, and tell him that their father had requested, before he died, that Joseph forgive them for all they had done to him. This made Joseph feel very badly, and he cried while they were speaking to him. How little they knew of his love toward them, and yet how keenly he felt it when they doubted it. This can be a lesson to us, dear young believers, for we should never doubt the Lord's love to us, because it never changes. It is an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3), unaltered by all our failures and short-comings. Of course if we go on in sinful ways, we will not enjoy His love to us, but the moment we confess our sins we will receive, as Joseph's brothers did, fresh assurances of His ever-continuing love and care. Joseph said, "Fear not!" Those oft-repeated words are always sweet to our souls. Our sins might well make us fear, if we did not know the grace which has abounded over them all and brought us into favor in the Beloved, through the work of Calvary (Ephesians 1:6).

1. Why were Joseph's brothers afraid after their father died?

2. Do you have any idea how many times the Lord chose to repeat those wonderful words "Fear not"? Take a concordance and prepare to be encouraged.

3. If you haven't read it yet, you'd really be encouraged by the pamphlet Fear Not by H. H. Snell. It's brief and well worth your time.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 48:1-49:23: God's Purposes in Grace

When Jacob was about to die, Joseph brought his two sons to him to receive a blessing. Jacob spoke so beautifully of how the Lord had led him all the years of his life, caring for him and feeding him and recalled once again His wonderful promises of blessing. It is grand to see a bright sunset — a happy ending to a believer's life, even though they have had a rough passage. Surely Jacob had had a stormy journey through life, but the end was bright.

Jacob's eyes were dim, but he was in communion with the thoughts of God about what he was about to do. When Joseph put Manasseh, the oldest of his sons, at Jacob's right hand, and Ephraim, the younger, at his left, Jacob crossed his arms so that his right hand was on Ephraim's head. The right hand in Scripture is looked at as the hand of power, and Ephraim was the one appointed of God to get the blessing even though he was the younger. God's blessings are by sovereign grace and not because we deserve them, and His thoughts are not ours. Joseph was displeased, and how often we, too, fail to understand God's ways of grace, because we bring in something of self.

Special Blessing for Judah

In the forty-ninth chapter, we read of the blessing of Jacob's twelve sons. We could write a good deal about this, but since we are writing mostly for young folks, we will just draw attention to a few simple points. There was a special blessing for Judah. Now we know that the Lord Jesus was born of that tribe, and here, hundreds of years before His birth, all these things were foretold of Him. "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise." Isn't that wonderful? Who is worthy of praise? Surely this refers to the Lord Jesus — the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5), and Jacob said that all were to bow before Him. Then we also read, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Judah was marked out as the royal tribe long before there was a king in Israel at all. Shiloh tells us of Christ, the one around whom the people will gather when He sets up His kingdom in a later day. His name of Jesus means Jehovah the Saviour, and He is the One who bore all the judgment of God against sin to bring about the promised blessings. In a coming day his clothes will be "washed in the blood of grapes," when He treads the winepress of judgment (Revelation 14:18-20). Will you meet Him now as your Saviour or later as your Judge?

One Rejected of His Brethren

The blessing of Joseph brings the Lord Jesus before us as the One who was rejected of His brethren the Jews, and just as God overruled and turned the wicked plans of Joseph's brothers into blessing, so He turned the awful act of crucifying Christ into blessing, not only for Israel, but for all the earth. The Jews were enclosed, separated from the Gentile nations by a wall, but now through Christ the "branches (of blessing) run over the wall" to us poor sinners of the Gentiles.

Christ was hated and cast out, but the "arms of His hands were made strong," and now He is mighty to save. What a wonderful Saviour He is! Is He your Saviour? He is both able and willing to save you now.

1. On whose head did Jacob put his right hand?

2. The prophecies about the Lord, such as the lawgiver from Judah, are thrilling to any Christian. What prophecies about Christ from the Psalms can you name that have already been fulfilled?

3. You'd no doubt benefit from pondering the fifty fulfilled prophecies found in Old Testament Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus the Messiah.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 46:28-47:31: A Future Time of Blessing

Judah went on ahead of the rest of his brothers and was the first to meet Joseph. The rest came later. This would remind us of how the Jews (the two tribes) will be brought back to their land and be the first to meet the Lord when He appears in glory. Then the other ten tribes will be gathered back also, and the whole twelve tribes will be made one in the land. What a time of blessing that will be for Israel, just as it was for all Joseph's brethren as they were nourished in the best of the land.

Five of Joseph's brothers were brought to Pharaoh and he asked them about their occupation. They replied that they were shepherds, so he gave them the land of Goshen for their dwelling place, where they could be near Joseph. Then Jacob came in and blessed Pharaoh. Poor failing Jacob was used to bless so great a king, and we know that the Jews who are so despised today will someday be used of God in blessing to all nations. All will have to come to Jerusalem each year to worship there (Zechariah 14:16) and acknowledge that "God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 59:13).

Dependence on the Lord

While Jacob and his sons had plenty, because they were depending on Joseph, the Egyptians had to come and buy their corn with money. Before long all their money was gone and yet they were still hungry. They, too, were dependent on Joseph, but they did not realize it as long as they had money of their own. As long as a sinner's money lasts, he can get along fairly well, but when his money is gone, then all his pleasure is gone too. Joseph then told them to bring their cattle, and this kept them from starvation for another year. But what about the next year? They had to sell their land to provide the needed food for themselves and their families. This would remind us of how the Lord often has to bring the sinner to the end of his own resources, like the men of Egypt, and then He gives His free gift of eternal life. After the Egyptians had sold everything they had, they were willing to accept the corn which Joseph gave them freely to sow their land. They were to give a fifth of their harvest to the king and acknowledge that the land was his. They said to Joseph, "Thou hast saved our lives," and they were willing to give what he asked from them. The Lord has done far more than this for us, and He wants our all. Are we willing to give it?

Reigning in Power

Joseph bought up all the land in Egypt, and this is a beautiful picture of how the Lord Jesus, in a coming day, will receive all the kingdoms of the world and reign in power over them. But Joseph had bought them for Pharaoh, and so after the Lord Jesus has reigned for one thousand years, He will then turn the kingdom over to the Father, that God may be all in all (Revelation 11:15; 1 Corinthians 15:24).

Jacob was 147 old, and he knew that he was near the end of his earthly life. He called Joseph to him and made him promise not to bury him in Egypt. Jacob believed God's promise that his descendants were to possess the land of Canaan, and he knew that even though his whole family had come down into Egypt, God would bring them back to the promised land in His own time.

1. What did Pharaoh give to Joseph's brothers?

2. The Lord Jesus' reign of power is something that all Christians are looking forward to. A small number of the details are given in Revelation 20. What do they tell us about that time to come?

3. You would no doubt enjoy the short and enlightening book The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ by E. H. Chater.

Conference: 1965, Draw Near

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

After 45. The fourth verse Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom he sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that she sold me. Hit her, for God did send me before you. To preserve life for these two years, have the famine been in the land? And yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be earring nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you of prosperity in the earth. Time to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me, Heather, but God. And he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Hastie, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph. God hath made me Lord of all Egypt, come down unto me. Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen. Thou shalt be near unto me. Thou and thy children, and thy children's children, thy flocks and thy herds, and all of thou hast. There will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine. Lest thou and thy household and all thou hast come to come to poverty. A little further down the chapter. 17th Verse. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph. Say unto thy brethren, this do ye laid your beasts, and go get you unto the land of Canaan. And take your father and your household, and come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat. The fat of the lamb. Now thou art commanded this. Do ye take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones? And for your wives, and bring your father and come also regard not your stuff for the good of all. The land of Egypt is yours. And the children of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of Raymond, but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of. And five changes of Raymond. And to his father he sent after this manner 10 ***** laden with the good things of Egypt, and 10 Shias laden with corn, bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent. So he sent his brethren away. They departed. And he said unto them, See that she fall not out. By the way. And this precious scene is well known to us all. Her brother has just been Speaking of a time when the Lord Jesus. Will be manifested in his glory as the Son of Man when he takes that place of headship not only over his people, Israel, but as over the whole earth. And I believe it's brought before us here in this portion where we see Joseph in his exalted place. But I believe we also have. The provision made before his brethren came down. To partake of all this, and I think there's much precious encouragement and instruction for us here. First of all, we see Joseph making himself known unto his brethren. Well, they were troubled since a sense of guilt filled their minds. And they were afraid at the presence of Joseph. But isn't this lovely in the fourth verse? Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. Isn't this lovely? Joseph, the one who made soul into Egypt, wanted to have those guilty brethren near him. He had waited until repentance had been rotting their hearts. It had taken some time before they were broken down, and God had to work that with us. And it took some time before we were broken down.

There was a realization of their guilt, and it was coupled also with a sense of the kindness. Of Joseph. For those of the two things, there is the sense of our own guilt and the remembrance of what we have done. But also what leads to full repentance is the knowledge. Of God's goodness knowest thou not, old man, that the goodness of God? Leader thee to repent them, and it was Joseph's goodness that finally broke them down. Now they stood in his presence, and he said, Come near unto me, I pray you. Oh, how lovely. And He wants us, brethren, to be near him. He doesn't want us to dwell at a distance from Him. What a privilege was ours in a special way this morning, as all we could hear him saying, Come near unto me, I pray you. And we came into His presence in the remembrance of his. And death. And it says here they came near, they came near all. If there's one here who hasn't responded to his invitation, he is saying, come near. Oh, you say, I feel so unworthy. But weren't Joseph's brethren unworthy? Indeed, each one of us that we were to look in would be overwhelmed by a sense of our own unworthiness. But Joseph invited them. They came because he invited them. They came to protect the provision he had made, not any provision they had made for themselves. And now he also adds. Be not angry with yourselves that you sold me, hit her, for God did send me before you to preserve life. We might be occupied too with our own failure and shortcomings. But isn't this lovely? Be not angry with yourselves. Surely there needed to be self judgment and there had been on their part as to all that was unfitting to his presence. Not having felt it and judged it. Now he could say it's gone, as it were. You don't need to be angry with yourselves. And if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. And to cleanse this from all unrighteousness. And then he points them to the fact that it was the hand of God that had sent him there. And how lovely it is that this morning we had the privilege of remembering God's side of the cross. But God had in that work he was glorified, our needs fully met. And this is the privilege that we had of remembering all that has come to us, because God has been glorified about the whole question of sin. But what particularly was on my heart was the provision that was made. Four of them the rest of the time. Notice the sixth verse. For these two years has the famine been in the land, And yet there are five years. There are five years and we don't know, brethren, what trials there may be ahead. We know that there have been trials in the past. We know that God has been faithful and that he hasn't failed. He has brought us through and he cared for his earring brethren, and in those two years when they came down in their need, he supplied their need and returned their money in their sacks. But he said they're five years more, five years more of famine. And there's enough ahead of us, too, to test us and show us our own weakness. For the wilderness, lessons are twofold. First, our own helplessness. For five is human weakness, and then God's whole provision. He said to Israel, Thou shalt remember all the way, the Lord thy God LED me these 40 years to humbly and to prove thee. But along with that also was the fact that he fed them, He clothed them, He took care of them through those 40 years. And so isn't it lovely that we can look ahead? Not knowing what is ahead of us, but there will be famine. But they weren't to dwell in a land of famine, if one might speak that way. They were to dwell in a place of plenty. They were to dwell in the place where Joseph, in the midst of the famine, made full and abundant provision for them.

And so he said. In the eighth verse, the ninth verse, paste you, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph. God hath made me Lord of all Egypt, come down unto me, tearing up. Thou shalt dwell on the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me. Yes, here's the whole secret. He didn't tell them how he was going to care for them for the next five years, But he said, you'll become my charge. You'll be near to me, and there I'll nourish you. And we don't know how the Lord is going to lead us through the problems and difficulties. That may be ahead of us, but we do need to be near him. And if we're near him by then, we have his precious promise. I will nourish. You know how beautiful this is, how it solves every doubt. If he had told him how, it might have raised many questions in their minds as to just how this plan would work out. But he didn't tell them how that he said. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me. And he said, this is lest you come to poverty, to know how many of us come to poverty in our lives because we don't dwell near him, we don't keep near him until we come to poverty. It isn't the provision isn't there for us. It is a fallen abundant provision. But we need to be near him. And so this was Joseph's word to his brethren. And he also says hasty, hasty. And the reason he said haste was because there were certain links with their place down in Canaan. That they might be loyal to break in a hurry. And perhaps there are things. That we have two links that connect us with a land of famine, things that we say, well, I can't get away from this situation. I can't get away from that. Well, Joseph said. Hey Steve,

beloved brethren, if there's anything that's hindering us from dwelling near to him, let us haste and remove that difficulty in his presence. Let us through haste and come down to him. And so he told them to come there because he was Lord. Of all Egypt. And now there's more here. And he said, Thou and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. Yes. Children, children's children and flocks and herds. Know how often there is a hindrance here? We say for ourselves, it's all right, but what about our children? They're not prepared for the difficulties of the path of faith. But isn't this beautiful to see Joseph anticipating? He said, not only yourselves, but your children. And your children's children. And as we look at the children, the young people, isn't this the precious promise that we can seek to be near the Lord and we can seek to bring our children into that position? They're going to face new problems, difficulties that we haven't had to face. But the one who has met our need is able to care for theirs too. And in the five years of famine that are ahead, he's not going to fail if we keep near to him all how much we need to be reminded of this. And I flocks and I heard that is that would connect, I believe, with their business, their possessions, and so with us.

They're often entanglements. Well, they were to bring not only themselves. Their children, but their flocks and their herds. Doesn't it remind us of when the children of Israel came out of Egypt? Why, Moses said, we'll take our children with us, not blocks, and our herds, not a hook shall be left behind. Yes, they were going to bring them all out, and God would make them his charge as they passed through the wilderness. That Alaska, their faith failed and as they looked at their little ones, they said, have you brought us out? Us and our little ones and our cattle would perish here in this wilderness. The Lord says, I'll bring your children in and their faith failed, but he brought their children in. Oh, how beautiful to see God's grace. Caring for those children and bringing them in. And all how good it is to turn to him in the years of famine that may lie ahead. And now there's a place of security in this world through which we're passing. Where there's so much to remind us that it is a world of famine. Now going down further in the chapter. 17th Verse. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren. This do you laid your beast, and go up, get you unto the land of Canaan. And then further down, he says in the. 21St Verse And the children of Israel did so, and Joseph gave them wagons. According to the commandment of Pharaoh and gave them provision for the way. Isn't this lovely? He didn't send them down and say, well, you have to straighten out this problem yourself of getting down there and getting cleared from all those entanglements down in Canaan and then getting back here. No, he even made provision for that and saw that when they went down into the land of Canaan, they had wagons that they had. For the way all how gracious is our God, oh how full his provision. And we are going to shortly leave this time of fellowship together. We're going to face some of the five years of famine perhaps as we return to our homes, to our businesses, to our assembly life and we realize this. And he's given us wagons, he's given us that which would carry us along. And saw that in spite of all the hardships of going down into Egypt and getting back to Canaan here where the wagons provided for them and for their little one, for their wives. Now in the 20th verse also regard not your stuff. What a word for all the things that they had once called. Worthwhile. I suppose before this they wouldn't have called this stuff. They would have said these are our possessions, these are our hard earned possessions and they would have considered them something worthwhile. But Pharaoh and Joseph say it's just stuff. It's just stuff. I don't regard that, he said. Because the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And brethren, isn't it true that we have a lot of stuff? A lot of things that we place a great deal of value upon? But the Lord says it's just stuff. We have better possessions. The little hymn says. Our hearts by thee are set on brighter things above. Strange that we ever should forget. Thine own most faithful love, nor may we look upon those possessions as being. Just. Stuff and this 22nd verse. They had 21St verse rather the end of the verse and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave changes of Raymond, but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of Raymond.

Well, this, these changes of Raymond, what would they speak about? Well, we mentioned in the young people's meeting about how those wise men went to their country another way, and the garments in Scripture are a figure to us of the associations of life. The leper was to wash his clothes. And blade them is flashing water the man that was unclean when he was cleansed? Wash his clothes. But here we find these people all outfitted with new garments. They were given changes of Raymond. And so when they went back, instead of their neighbors looking on them and saying, well, there are those poor travelers, they said, oh, where have those people been clothed from? They've got Raymond from a king. How beautiful her clothes are. Yes, they have received raiment from the king of Pharaohs, which they could display to the people whom they met. Brethren, God has given us a change of reign. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. All things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. And I hope as I return and you return from these meetings. People will see that we've received raiment from the king that we carry, that we carry, have a different way by which we carry ourselves through this world. As those who have been, as it were, in the King's palace, in the presence of the one who loved us. And who has preserved and saved our lives by a great deliverance? Oh, why does it say that he gave the silver and the five changes of Raymond to Benjamin? Well, I just pass on this little thought. Benjamin was specially near to Joseph. Benjamin was one who felt a special. Endearment of relationship with Joseph. And so Joseph made a special provision for him. And you know, the nearer we are to the Lord, the more we're going to appreciate His grace and the more we're going to show that we've been in His presence. And so here were. 300 pieces of silver. Silver speaks of redemption all. How lovely. Why don't we appreciate what the Lord has done for us more? Well, where He is. Perhaps all the other 10 brethren were brothers of Joseph, but here was one who especially near to Joseph. And so he went back with his 300 pieces of silver. Rather, I hope we'll return with a deeper appreciation of a redemption that is in Christ Jesus. I hope we'll return with a deeper sense of what the Lord has done for us. To make us his arms and the nearer we have been to him and the more we have enjoyed his presence in these meetings. The more we will carry away with us of that appreciation. And these five we mentioned the five years of famine. Well, here were five changes of raiment. Perhaps it would speak of the whole five years that were ahead, because Joseph, or Benjamin rather, was one who was specially near. Having Joseph said the ones that were near unto him would be cared for. And so here's one who in advance gets his five changes of Raymond. All beloved brethren, how good it is to look out. Upon a future of famine, and know that being near the Lord. All taken care of all the way. He's not going to fail every step of the way. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today. And forever some of us say, well, I know that the Lord undertake for me in the present difficulties. Yes, thank God he will, but he'll undertake for us all the way home. Five also speaks of weakness, and it's a confessed sense of weakness. It's no boasting only in him each.

New garment that Joseph display that Benjamin displayed as those years passed by. Was but a fresh reminder that he had been near to Joseph. Who was Lord of all Egypt? And May God grant that as the time goes on in our lives and new difficulties and problems face us if the Lord leaves us here, that it will just be occasion to display again that we have been in His presence. We have, I believe, that thought in 2nd Corinthians 3 and 18. For it says, we always open face, beholding the glory of the Lord. Are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Each one of these garments came from the king, came from Joseph, but each one had a different glory to it, I'm sure. And as we go on in his presence, there will be that reflection that will increase in our lives. More of himself that will be seen. And so as others looked on and saw Benjamin. That youngest son. And saw what the others didn't have. The new garments they must, they must have said. He must be a special favorite. He must be a special favorite. Well, Joseph perhaps, or rather John perhaps had a little of this in another way. In the New Testament

he leaned on Jesus bosom. He called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. Or you say, has the Lord got special favorites? While everyone who appreciates nearness to him is a special favorite of his? Every one of the disciples could have called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. Because it says having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. He loved Peter, he loved James, but John was near enough to him to gain a special appreciation of that, and so he called himself a disciple whom Jesus loved. May God grant that we all consider ourselves. To special favorites. He loves us, brethren, and he's going to love us through the whole five years of famine. Well, these were brought down. And it says special things were taken for Jacob, who wasn't there. Well. Perhaps there's somebody that wasn't at this meeting. Perhaps there's a discouraged soul that says, well, I'm not going to go to the conference. It's a lot of effort and all. You just go there and you meet a lot of people and sometimes you don't get all you expect at the conference. Well, isn't this wonderful? Here are a special provision. ***** laden and everything carried home. The poor unbelieving Jacob. Poor brethren, what are we going to carry home? Are we going to go back and find fault with the brethren that didn't come? And they were a bit discouraged and said, well, I'm not going to go too much effort. Well, they didn't go back and find fault with Jacob. They went back and said, look, Jacob, he said all this for you. He said all this for you. What did Jacob do? He says I'll go, I'll go down. I'll, I'll get near him too. But that's the way he provides. Oh, how lovely. May we carry something home with us of the provision that he has given to us and. Also for those who are not there, the ones that carried by the stuff. Samuel's time they were depart alike. May we carry something home for them? But then there was one little word he gave them. 24th verse. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed, and he said unto them. See that you've fallen out. By the way, wasn't it sad they have to add a thing like that? He said you might get quarreling. You know, on your way home you might get quarreling. He said, watch that. Well, how sad it is. The Lord's done so much for us. He's won our hearts. He's made so many gracious provisions for us. And promises for the future. But all I'm afraid we have hearts just like Joseph's brethren. Our libel to fall out, by the way.

May the Lord give us grace to watch this. See that she fall, not out, by the way. One is sometimes said, the only thing that we're going to take home with us to glory when we leave this scene is not our possessions. What are we going to take home? Our brethren? Our brethren, the only thing that I look on in this world that I'm going to have in heaven is my brethren. That's all. Not any money, not any automobile or possessions. Useful as they may be down here, they're all going to be left behind. But you, dear brethren, into whose faces I looked this afternoon, we're going to spend eternity together. That's what we have that really come that we value our brethren. Are we falling out of them? Do we value them? We ought to maybe things that cause us exercise. There may be things that cast us our knees before the Lord about one another, and perhaps our brethren about us, but all at us seek to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. May God grant that as we face those years that may be ahead of us, till the Lord comes for those days or those moments, whatever it may be. That in the meantime. We will seek to dwell near him and enjoy the gracious provision that he's made.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 45:24-46:27: Assurance and Guidance

Once again Joseph’s brothers started for home, but this time they had happier hearts than ever before. Their sin had been confessed, and they knew that Joseph was alive, but above all they knew Joseph’s heart. We can imagine the surprise of poor Jacob when he heard the wonderful tidings, and saw all the provision for the journey. How often we, like Jacob, are inclined to faint under the difficulties of the way, but as we learn our own weakness, we learn that the Lord never changes. Jacob, or rather Israel (his new name), exclaimed, “It is enough!” It is a grand thing to meditate upon all the Lord has done for us, and then we, like Jacob, can rest satisfied in His abundant provision for our journey to glory.

Remembering God’s Promises

Then Jacob went to Beersheba (the well of the oath), and there he remembered God’s wonderful promises in connection with the land of Canaan. There the Lord appeared to Jacob, calling him by name, and giving him the assurance that He would go down into Egypt with him. This settled everything. If the Lord was going to be with him, he need not worry, for the sense of His presence always gives rest and peace.

Dear young reader, perhaps you are being called upon to make some important decision, and you wonder what you should do. Why not do as Jacob did? The first thing he did was to go to the place where the Lord had made His promises to Abraham long before. We, too, need to get to the place where we realize all the Lord has done for us and own His claims over us. Then, like Jacob, we can worship there. Next, we should await the word from the Lord telling us what to do and promising that He will be with us in it. Sometimes we would like to have guidance, but we are not in the place, or state of soul, where we can get it. There is a good word for us in Psalm 36:9, “In Thy light shall we see light.” Too often we are like the Jews of old who asked Jeremiah to enquire of the Lord for them, but when he told them what the Lord had said, they refused to hearken (Jeremiah 42-43). God will not guide us unless our wills are broken in His presence, and we are ready to say, “Teach me to do Thy will” (Psalm 143:10).

Bringing All to the Lord

On the previous occasion when Joseph’s brothers had come into Egypt, they had brought a little balm, a little honey, and other things for Joseph. At that time they had not known Joseph or his heart toward them, but now in the fullest confidence they brought all they had to him. Oh dear young believer, do not be afraid to bring all to the Lord, for you will never regret it. The little hymn expresses it so beautifully:

They brought their little ones too, and it is a fine thing when a family sets out all together to seek the Lord, as these men were seeking the face of Joseph. Joseph prepared his chariot, and went out to meet Jacob his father, and it surely was a happy meeting after those many years. It reminds one of the time when the Lord will appear and make Himself known to His people Israel in a coming day.

1. Why did Joseph’s brothers have happy hearts as they returned home?

2. Being filled with the promises of God is a wonderful way to fill our minds and hearts. What does the Apostle Paul say about the subject in Philippians 4?

3. In the pamphlet Making Room for God’s Blessings in Your Life: The Right Way and the Wrong Way by B. Anstey, you’ll find some wonderful instruction for joining with Joseph’s brothers’ happy hearts.

Joseph sent a messenger after his brothers, and he overtook them on the way. The good things he had given them were in their sacks, but they had not found them: nor could they, until there was a full confession of their guilt and sin, but Joseph’s goodness was gradually leading them to repentance. When they came into Joseph’s presence, they said, “What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants.” Then they went over the whole story from start to finish, telling all that had happened, though omitting their own sin in selling Joseph. However, this was going to come out too. Joseph could not refrain himself any longer and told everyone to go out of the room except his brothers.

Joseph Revealed

What a wonderful scene followed. Joseph wept and said, “I am Joseph.” His brothers were troubled at his presence and could not answer. They stood at a distance from him, and so he said, “Come near to me, I pray you” — and they came near. It reminds us of Peter, who, feeling his guilt, was afraid of the Lord’s presence, but the Lord said, “Fear not” (Luke 5:10). How good to hear the Lord saying to sinners even today, “Come unto Me” and also calling His own around Himself to remember Him in His death.

Joseph then went on to tell how God had been behind all that had happened and had sent him down into Egypt. He told them not to be grieved with themselves, but that God was going to preserve their lives by a great deliverance. He assured their hearts of this by saying, “It was not you that sent me hither, but God.” Many of the things they had not been able to understand in the past were made plain in a moment. How true this will be when we see our blessed Saviour. How true it will also be when the Lord makes Himself known to Israel in a coming day. All the hard questions and problems will be explained as when Solomon answered the Queen of Sheba all her questions. Joseph opened his heart telling his brothers about his plans to nourish and care for them in Egypt and then fell on their necks and kissed them. After this his brothers talked freely to him, and so it is with us. After we learn how much the Lord loves us, and all He has done for us, and of His plans for our blessing, then we can hold sweet communion with Him. We can talk with Him in prayer, and He delights to have our confidence.

Brought Into Blessing

When Pharaoh heard of all that had happened, he called Joseph, telling him to bring his brethren into Egypt where they could enjoy the best of the land. The whole incident is a type of the time when a remnant of Israel will admit their guilt in crucifying their Messiah, and be brought into blessing when Christ (of whom Joseph is a type) reigns in power over the earth. All the kings of the world will have to bring their glory and honor to Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16), and God will see that His people Israel are given the best things of the earth. So here, they were given wagons, raiment, and all the good things of Egypt, as well as the finest part of the land when they came there to live.

1. How did Joseph’s brothers react when Joseph told them who he was?

2. Repentance and restoration are also major themes in Psalm 51. How did the Lord answer the cry of David’s heart when David realized that he had sinned?

3. Joseph Revealing Himself to His Brethren by A. M. Barry is a lovely, short booklet giving more on this beautiful theme of restoration.

Perhaps you are wondering how Joseph’s brothers were going to be brought to repentance. It was through Joseph’s kindness. They were his enemies, who once hated him, but he returned good for their evil and provided water for them to wash their tired feet, food for their animals, as well as a good dinner for them in his own house. Surely this reminds us of what God has provided for His enemies, even salvation full and free. If you are unsaved, dear reader, may the goodness of God lead you to repentance (Romans 2:4), just as Joseph’s kindness led his brothers to confess their sin.

Receiving His Blessings

While dinner was being prepared, Joseph’s brothers were getting ready to give their present to him, a little balm, a little honey, and other things. Joseph did not even mention what they gave him, but instead he asked after their welfare. God does not need anything from the sinner. He says, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). That is like the sinner’s “little present” to God, and it is utterly useless to Him; in fact, it is hateful to Him. But He is interested in your welfare, dear sinner, and like Joseph, He has prepared everything for you and asks you to sit down and thank Him for it. There was, however, one great barrier to the full enjoyment of the feast. They had made obeisance, they had given their present, but they had not confessed their sin, and though Joseph’s heart yearned and wept over them, he could not make himself known until they fully owned their guilt.

When they had eaten the wonderful dinner which Joseph provided, the steward filled their sacks with as much corn as they could carry, and then put their money in the top of them. In Benjamin’s sack he also put Joseph’s silver cup. What beautiful lessons we can learn from all this. God delights to give us all we can carry! His supply is unlimited, but our capacity is limited — so very small at times, and we do not have room to receive all His blessings (Malachi 3:10). Then what a sweet thought in the cup — Joseph’s silver cup. Silver speaks of redemption, and so on the ground of redemption, even the youngest of God’s children has his place at the Lord’s table, partaking of the cup of blessing.

The Goodness of God

But they did not know all that was in their sacks, nor about the cup being there. They were not in a state to enter into the blessing which was in Joseph’s heart for them, and that is why we are told about the strange way in which they were brought back. There is another thing we might mention here — purpose is always before responsibility in the Bible. God tells of His plans for blessing us before there is any mention of

how we should act in the place where His grace put us. Some of our young readers might wonder why this is. It is because if we got what we deserved, it would be eternal judgment, but because of God's purpose and the work of His Son which has enabled Him to carry out His purposes, we get the blessing from His hand instead of judgment. Oh that we realized more of the goodness of the heart of God! If we did, we would feel more of the constraint of His love.

1. How were Joseph's brothers brought to repentance?

2. Having a sense of the Lord's love to us has a tremendous impact on our lives. How did Naomi's sense of the Lord's love change throughout the book of Ruth? How did the Lord create that change?

3. You will no doubt enjoy the short booklet God's Unchanging Love by F. C. Blount.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 43:8-24: Blessing to Ruined Sinners

Judah told his father that he would take the responsibility of bringing Benjamin down to Egypt, and he became surety for him. If anything happened to Benjamin, he said he would bear the blame. Doesn't this remind us of the Lord Jesus who became the Surety for us? We had a great debt of sins, and the wages of sin is death, so the Lord Jesus paid the great debt with His own precious blood in order to deliver us from the judgment which we deserved. What a wonderful Saviour He is!

Acceptable to God

At last Jacob gave in and agreed that he would send Benjamin. He told his sons to go and bring a present of a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds to the lord of Egypt. This present would, Jacob hoped, make him favorable toward them. What are you bringing to God to find favor in His sight? Are you trying a little balm or honey? Are you trying to make a "balm" for your conscience by offering some of your own works to God, or do you think that the "honey" of your kindness to others, and love to your fellow man will turn away His righteous wrath against your sins? There is nothing in your own resources which will make you acceptable to God. Just as Joseph's brothers were the objects of Joseph's love, not because of anything they had done, but because of the goodness of his own heart toward them, so we who are saved are the objects of the sovereign love and grace of God which we never deserved at all. The work of Christ on the cross is the only ground of blessing to ruined sinners.

It is as useless to bring your prayers, churchgoing, penance, and good living to God as it was for these men to bring their offering of balm, honey, spice and nuts. Nor will it do you any good to bring your "double money" to Him, for you cannot buy your way into heaven. The price has already been paid, neither with silver nor gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Awakened Sinners in the Presence of God

In spite of all Jacob's fears, there was, under it all, a real living faith which God's eye could see. It is always comforting to know that although we may be mistaken at times as to who is really saved and who is not, yet, "The Lord knoweth them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19). He never makes any mistakes.

What a great surprise awaited them when they arrived in Egypt. Joseph commanded his servant to prepare a dinner for them so that they could all eat together with him. This made his brothers afraid. No doubt they felt much like an awakened sinner in the presence of God, who does not know His love toward him. They said that Joseph was seeking an occasion against them and would make them slaves, but they were soon to learn differently. How many people think that God wants to rob them of their liberty, and that if they get saved, they will have to give up everything, and not have any pleasure at all in life. This is only Satan's lie, for while God must make the sinner feel his sins, it is only that he may be set free in Christ.

Joseph's brothers then offered the money which they had found in their sacks to the steward of the house. It reminds us of those who find out that they have sinned and would like to pay for their sins in some way of their own. There are few who realize that the greatest of all sins is the rejection of Christ, just as Joseph's brothers' greatest sin was the selling of Joseph to the Ishmaelites long before.

1. What did Jacob tell his sons to bring to the lord of Egypt in order for him to be favorable to them?

2. How does the Lord help us to understand that His love for us has nothing to do with our worthiness and everything to do with Himself? What has He done to show you love in spite of what you have done?

3. You might enjoy something of God's divine love for individuals by reading the pamphlet The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved by H. Smith.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 42:25-33; Genesis 43:1-9: His Perfect Wisdom

Joseph was rich. He did not need the money which his brothers had brought to buy food. He told his servants to fill their sacks with corn and he also provided all the food they needed for their journey. Then they started out for Canaan.

At night they stopped at the inn, and when they opened their sacks, what do you think they found in them? Every one of them found that his money had been put in the top of his sack. They could not understand it. Why should their money be given back to them? It was just because Joseph loved them, even though they did not know him, nor the kindness of his heart. If you are unsaved, dear young reader, you do not know the heart of God. If you knew His great love, you could not go on one day longer without Him. The love of God is far greater than Joseph's love for his brothers, but like them, you do not realize how He longs to bless you. God's love has been proven in the gift of His beloved Son who died for sinners. He now offers eternal life as a free gift to "whosoever will."

Walking in Faith

Upon their arrival in Canaan, they told their father about all that had happened. Poor Jacob was greatly troubled when he heard that the lord of Egypt (Joseph) had kept Simeon, and worse still that he had said they must bring Benjamin down before they could get any more corn. Jacob did not know the blessing which was in store for him and his family but only thought of how hard it would be to part with his much-loved son Benjamin. Do you feel some burden like this pressing on you, dear Christian? Perhaps a dark cloud has come into your life, and you are wondering why the Lord has allowed it just as Jacob did. If Jacob had only known the future, he would not have worried at all, but God did not tell him. He wanted his servant to walk by faith, not sight. Faith believes that God knows the future perfectly, and here in His perfect wisdom He was working things out for the best in Jacob's life. How good to trust Him! He knows your future and mine too. Let us learn then to trust Him even when the way seems dark and uncertain, and say like one of old, "My Father, Thou art the Guide of my youth."

My Times Are in Thy Hand

A good many months rolled by, and again Joseph's father and brothers felt the need of corn from Egypt. Poor old Jacob had put off the decision to send Benjamin there for a long time, but it had to come, for when God begins to work, He will not give in. He continues the trial until the lesson is learned. Joseph had definitely told his brothers that he would not see them again unless they brought Benjamin with them. Jacob began to look at "second causes," forgetting that the first cause of all that had happened was that the Lord had allowed it. He asked his sons why they had told the lord of Egypt that they had another brother. How often we, too, ask the "why" and "wherefore" of things, only to learn that God does them His own way, and He brings us to the point where we have to say like David, "My times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31:15).

1. What did Joseph's brothers find when they stopped at the inn?

2. There are a lot of things in our lives that don't make sense to us. Learning to trust the Lord in those circumstances takes a lifetime for many of us. What did the Apostle Paul say about learning to be content?

3. Sometimes our hearts are crying out to the Lord asking Him to end the suffering. You might find the pamphlet How Long, O Lord? Until ... by R. Elliott quite comforting if you are going through one of those difficult times.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 42:1-24: Rejection and Repentance

Far away in the land of Canaan there was a starving family, and the message reached them that there was corn in Egypt. Jacob their father then sent his sons down to buy some food, and after a long, tiresome journey they arrived in the land. They went to Joseph, who was then the governor, and bowed down to him with their faces to the earth. They did not, however, know that it was Joseph their brother, for he did not make himself known to them. He talked to them in the Egyptian language and began at once to question them as to where they came from, and about their father, their brother, and other things. We know that in a similar way, when the Lord Jesus returns to Jerusalem to put down His enemies, the Jews will not know Him, and they will ask, "What are these wounds in thine hands?" (Zechariah 13:6). He will then reveal Himself to them, as Joseph did to his brothers a little later, and they will mourn in repentance because of their great sin in rejecting and crucifying Him.

Tribulation Before Confession

Joseph was trying on this occasion to bring his brothers to repentance, and he spoke roughly to them, and so we know that the Jews will have to pass through a terrible time of tribulation before they finally confess their sin. The Lord will indeed have to "deal roughly" with them during those seven years of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7).

Joseph accused them of being spies, and said they had come to see the barrenness of the land. They replied saying that they were true men. We know, however, that they were not true men, for they had lied to their father when they sold Joseph. He then put them all in prison for three days. After that he said that he would keep one of them, their brother Simeon, and let the rest go back home to their father with the necessary corn which they had come to buy. The next time they came they were to bring their younger brother Benjamin, and in this way Joseph said he would prove the truth of their story. Since Joseph was speaking to them through an interpreter, they did not know he could understand what they were saying as they talked among themselves about their guilt in having sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites long ago. It is always well to remember that God hears everything we say and knows all about us. Think of the many years during which Joseph's brothers had carried a bad conscience and how unhappy it made them. A bad conscience is a miserable companion, isn't it?

Repentance and Blessing

In spite of all their sin, Joseph loved his brothers and wept secretly for them. How this reminds us of the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). He longed to bless those sinful people, but they would not have Him. If you are unsaved, dear reader, God is grieved over your rejection of Christ and waits to save you. Just as Joseph bound Simeon and kept him in prison to make sure that his brothers would all return, so the Lord often brings sorrow into people's lives in order to make them turn to Him in true repentance. When Simeon's brothers did come back, how wonderfully Joseph blessed them, and when a sinner turns to the Lord in repentance, He blesses him abundantly too, both for time and eternity. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

1. Did Joseph's brothers recognize him when they came down to Egypt?

2. The Lord doesn't willingly make the lives of His people difficult. However He does allow pain when He needs to in order to help us grow. How did Job respond to the difficulties in his life at first? How did his response change over the course of the book of Job?

3. You might find extra help on this portion by reading the pamphlet Joseph and His Brethren: How He Won and Why He Wounded Them by F. T. Heath.

Joseph told Pharaoh that the extra corn which could not be eaten during the years of plenty should be laid up in storehouses, ready to use during the years of famine which were to follow. God was working in His own way to bring Joseph's brothers to confess their guilt and fulfill Joseph's dreams, as well as to provide the needed food to keep people from starvation.

Pharaoh saw at once that this plan was an excellent one, and he honored Joseph greatly, making him ruler over all Egypt. Joseph was driven through the streets of the city in a chariot, and everyone was forced to "bow the knee" to him. How wonderfully God rewarded him for all he had endured, for we may be sure He never fails to honor those who honor Him (1 Samuel 2:30). This exalted place given to Joseph was a shadow of the place which the Lord Jesus will have in a soon-coming day. He was obedient unto death, and God will give Him the very highest place of honor, and all will be forced to bow the knee to Him owning Him as Lord (Philippians 2:8-11). Those who own Him as their Lord now are saved. Have you confessed Him as your Lord and Saviour, dear reader?

The Body of Christ

Pharaoh called Joseph Zaphnathpaaneah, which means a revealer of secrets, and then he gave him a Gentile woman to be his wife. This reminds us of God's great secret, hidden down through the ages, which has now been revealed. It was hidden in God (Ephesians 3:9) until Christ, like Joseph, was rejected by His brethren (the Jews). Then the secret came out, and we find it in Ephesians 3:3-6. The Gentiles are now being brought in as part of the one body, and Christ is going to have a bride. Most of our young readers are Gentiles, but perhaps some are Jews, and we might say that although God is particularly working among the Gentiles, still the message is to "whosoever will." When anyone believes the gospel, he ceases to be either a Jew or a Gentile in the eyes of God, and becomes part of the church of God which is composed of all true believers. When the last one is saved, the body of Christ (the church) will be completed, and the Lord will come and take His own to heaven. The church is the bride of Christ, and the marriage will take place in heaven (Revelation 19:7) between the time He comes for His own (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17) and the time (at least seven years later) when He comes back with them to set up His kingdom on earth (Jude 14).

The Bread of Life

At last the time of famine came. "Where can we get bread to eat?" was the question everywhere. They went to Pharaoh, but he said, "Go to Joseph." Surely everyone who is unsaved is in need of Christ, the bread of life, and we would send out a similar message, "Go to Jesus." He will meet all your need, just as Joseph was able to meet the need of those starving ones. There was plenty for all who came to him from every land, but they had to pay for their corn, whereas the gospel is free. You can "Buy... without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). Come now, and find food for your hungry soul. The Lord Jesus is waiting to bless and save you today.

1. How did Pharaoh honor Joseph for interpreting his dream and coming up with a plan to prepare for the famine to come?

2. What other well-known Jews in the Old Testament had Gentile wives?

3. You might enjoy a wonderful and simple presentation of the church as the bride of Christ in the pamphlet The Church: The Bride of Christ by H. E. Hayhoe.

Pharaoh dreamed that he saw seven well-fed cows feeding in a meadow. Then soon after, he saw seven other thin ones come up out of the river, and they ate up the fat ones. Then he had another dream in which he saw seven good full ears of corn, followed by seven thin ears which sprang up and devoured the full ones. He was greatly troubled by the dreams, and he asked the wise men of Egypt to interpret them for him. These wise men were, no doubt, very useful to him in explaining other things, but they could not understand the ways of God. It is always so, for the Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). If a man does not have the fear of God in his heart — if he is not truly born again — we cannot expect him to understand the Bible or the things of God. "The natural man (or the unsaved boy or girl) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Remember this at school. You may have many clever teachers and student friends, but do not expect them to explain or understand the Bible if they are not saved. If they tell you that some of the things in the Bible are foolish and untrue, do not be surprised. Their very ignorance about divine things is only a fresh proof of the truth of God's Word which tells us that they cannot understand it until they are saved. Never allow anyone to disturb your confidence in the Bible. If the teacher tells you something contrary to it, do not believe him. True science will always prove the Bible to be true, but many of the things taught in schools today are only theories — or suppositions. You may not always understand the Bible but always believe it. It is God's Word, and God cannot lie.

Honor Belongs to God

When the wise men were unable to explain Pharaoh's dream, then the butler remembered his mistake. He had forgotten Joseph. A Christian may drift away from the Lord, but, like the butler, he is reminded of his fault sooner or later, and brought back. The butler remembered how Joseph's word had come true. Yes, what Joseph said was by the Word of the Lord, and so it must come true.

Then Pharaoh called for Joseph to tell him the meaning of his dream. Joseph, however, would not take any honor to himself, but said, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace." Honor belongs to God, and we should always, like Joseph, make sure that He is given all the glory. Sometimes the world would like to honor us, but we have to watch against anything that exalts man instead of God.

Joseph then began to tell Pharaoh the meaning of what he had dreamed. There were to be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

Let us just give a little practical word here. Some of our young readers have good jobs, and plenty of money, but remember it will not always be that way. If the Lord does not come, there will be a time of shortage, and we should not be wasteful with what we have. If we use it for the Lord, He will repay us well, but if we are wasteful and extravagant with food, clothes, and other things, there will be a time of need when we shall wish we had been more careful.

1. Who told Pharaoh to call Joseph to interpret his dream?

2. Today there are many sports, business and entertainment figures who brag continually about themselves. Joseph was able to do something far more unique than an artful dunk or a beautiful smile. Compare what he had to say with some of the popular modern leaders.

3. If you are finding refreshment for your soul in studying the life of Joseph, you would really enjoy listening to the CD Audio Album Joseph: Revealer of Secrets, Saviour of the World by H. Smith.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 40:19-41:1: Accepting or Rejecting Christ

The bakemeats which the baker had prepared for Pharaoh, in his dream, would remind us of the good works which a sinner might try to do for God. It was no doubt a good deal of hard work to prepare this tasty food, and it looked lovely in the nice white basket, but it did not bring him into favor with Pharaoh. The good works of a sinner may look very fine in the eyes of others too, but God says, “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). The very best that you can do, if you are unsaved, is just like filthy rags in the presence of God. It is like Adam’s fig-leaf apron — utterly useless to make you prepared to stand before Him. But why was the butler accepted while the baker was rejected? The answer is very simple. He did not bring anything of his own work. He simply put into Pharaoh’s hand that which spoke of the shed blood of Christ — that was all. Nothing else would do, and nothing else will do for you, and let us assure you now that if you reject God’s way of salvation, there are death and judgment before you, just as there was death before the baker in spite of all his fine baking for Pharaoh. Perhaps you are saying, “Well, I’ll take my chance,” but there is no chance about it. If you reject Christ, there is certain judgment before you; if you accept Him, you will be saved forever. Joseph’s word came true, and so will every Word of the Bible, for it abides forever.

Saved by Grace

Before we pass on let us make it very clear that it is not anything which we can do that saves our souls. There are so many today who depend on good works, character building, going to church, prayers, penance, and the like, but one passage of God’s Word settles the matter once and for all, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9). Just take your place as a sinner before God, and let the words of the little hymn be the true expression of your heart NOW.

The Lord Jesus to Reign

Two full years rolled by and Joseph was still in prison. The butler had forgotten all about him, but the Lord still had His eye on His devoted servant. His dreams were soon to be fulfilled, and he was to be lord of Egypt in spite of all the hatred of his brethren, and the wrong treatment of the Egyptians. So, too, it is almost two thousand years since the Lord Jesus was rejected by this world, both the Jews and Gentiles sharing in the guilt, but God is soon going to manifest Him as Lord of all. God has not forgotten what this world did to His Son, and He will see to it that He is honored when His time comes. That time is getting very near, and the world is becoming rapidly worse. Men are trying to forget about the One whom they crucified, and they are “treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God” (Romans 2:5).

Before God’s judgments fall, the Lord Jesus will come and take His own to glory (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18), and then, after seven years of terrible tribulation, the cry will be made, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15).

1. What do the bakemeats prepared by the chief baker for Pharaoh represent to us?

2. Grace is a wonderfully simple plan of God that is terribly hard to grasp for the natural heart. What does Ephesians 2:7-9 tell us is true of grace?

3. Many people read gospel papers quickly with little thought for anything other than the story they are reading. However you might find real refreshment for your soul by reading a volume such as Echoes of Grace: “Under the Blood”. It’s a collection of gospel stories that presents the way of salvation, but it includes many that present grace. Read it with soul hunger, and you’ll find lots of soul food.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 40:1-19: Favor Through the Blood

Pharaoh had put his chief butler and his chief baker into the prison where Joseph was, and the captain of the guard put them under his charge. One night they each had a dream. In the morning Joseph saw that they were sad, and he asked them why it was. We might say that all our dreams are not messages from the Lord, but sometimes He speaks in that way (Job 33:14-17), and we should be willing to listen to His voice, if what we dream is according to His Word. His Word is always the sure test for everything. The chief butler dreamed that there was a vine with three branches which budded, blossomed, and brought forth ripe grapes. He then took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh’s cup and gave him to drink. Joseph told him the meaning of his dream, but said that the interpretation was from God and not by his own wisdom. He told him that in three days he would be taken out of the prison, and brought into favor in Pharaoh’s court again.

Remembering the Lord

This interpretation made the butler very happy, and it would remind us of a sinner who sees the blessing that is brought to him through Christ, the true vine (John 15:1). The grapes pressed into Pharaoh's cup would tell us of all the Lord Jesus endured for us at Calvary when He bore the crushing load of our sins, shedding His precious blood to put them away forever. When the butler put the cup into Pharaoh's hand, he was accepted, and so when a sinner approaches God through the shed blood of Christ, he is sure to be accepted. There is no other way.

Joseph then asked the butler not to forget him. He said, "Think on me when it shall be well with thee," but we read in the last verse of our chapter, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him." It is sad when we forget the kindness of others, but much worse when we forget God's kindness to us. Perhaps the one who reads these lines is a true believer, and knows that the blood of Christ has put away his sins and brought him into blessing. Now that it is well with you, do you not hear the Lord Jesus saying to you, "Remember Me"? Are you going to be like the butler and forget Him, or are you remembering Him in His death, till He comes? We can talk about being thankful to the Lord for all He has done for us, but our lives show how much we really appreciate His love. What does your life and mine show, dear reader? Are we living for His glory day by day?

Brought Into Favor

The chief baker then told his dream to Joseph also, thinking there would be a good interpretation to his as there had been to the chief butler's. How different it was! He dreamed that he had three white baskets on his head, and in the top one there were all kinds of bake-meats for Pharaoh. Then the birds came along and ate them up. Joseph told him that within three days he would be brought out of the prison, but instead of being restored into Pharaoh's favor, he would be hung upon a tree, and the birds would eat his flesh. Perhaps the baker thought he was just as good as the butler, but they were both guilty in the eyes of Pharaoh, and it was not a question of one being better than the other but of what they presented to him in order to be brought into his favor again. We shall notice a little more about this in the next chapter.

1. How did Joseph interpret the chief butler's dream?

2. What right do we have for God to look on us favorably? Does our answer change after we come to know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour? Can we increase God's love and favor toward us by living a better Christian life? What verses can you give to show your answer comes from Scripture?

3. If you really want to take a deep dive into the basis for your being accepted into God's favor, then you might consider reading Justification and Acceptance With God by A. C. Ord. You won't find it very light reading, but you will find it contains a very solid foundation for the Biblical teaching about our standing before God.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 3:16-24: Driven From the Garden

After letting Adam and Eve hear the wonderful promise of a coming Redeemer (the promised Seed), then God told them the sad results of their sin. They were to have sorrow, suffering and hard work during their lives, with death at the end. It became a groaning creation, and even the animal creation has had to share in the suffering. God also cursed the ground for Adam's sake, and all the thorns and thistles we see are the results of this curse. We cannot help but think of the crown of thorns which wicked men placed on the head of the Lord Jesus, when He was made a curse for us. Yes, He died on the cross to put our sins away, and bring us into even greater blessing than if Adam had never sinned at all.

Then God clothed Adam and Eve with coats of skins, and in order to get these skins, the animal must be killed. This pointed on to the Lord Jesus, who died for us, that we might be clothed in a robe of righteousness suited to the presence of God. Any other robe or covering that a sinner can have is only "filthy rags" before God (Isaiah 61:10 and Isaiah 64:6).

The Tree of Life

If God had allowed them to eat of the tree of life and live forever in this world, it would have been terrible. So He drove them out of the garden and would not let them return. But God had something much better in His purposes of grace. In Revelation 22 we read about a new scene, and all in that city can eat of the tree of life, for "there shall be no more curse." The ones who enter there "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

God placed Cherubim and a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden to keep the way of the tree of life. These are types or symbols to bring certain things before our minds. Now God uses a great many types in His Word, but He does not want us to form our own opinion about what they mean, or we might make some bad mistakes. The meanings of these types are found in the Bible if we read it carefully and prayerfully. The Cherubim speak to us of God's righteousness in the government of this world. God must act in righteousness and punish sin. We deserved the punishment, but the "flaming sword" of God's judgment fell on the Lord Jesus at the cross (see Zechariah 13:7), and He bore all the sins of those who believe, and now we can sing:

Dear young reader, can you say that Jesus bore your judgment? For if He did not bear it for you, then you must bear it yourself in Hell forever. You will be kept out of the heavenly city, where only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life can enter.

1. Why did God drive Adam and Eve out of the garden?

2. Why would it have been terrible for God to have let Adam and Eve eat fruit from the tree of life? Why would it be terrible for Him to let one sinner with one stain of sin into heaven?

3. The cherubim mentioned in this chapter are one of a group of angels. You can find out lots more of what the Bible has to say about angels in the pamphlet Angels by J. Williams.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 3:7-15: Hiding From God's Presence

As soon as Adam and Eve had taken the fruit, their eyes were opened, and the conscience which they received by their sinful act made them feel their nakedness. So they made aprons out of fig leaves to cover themselves. This is just like men and women today, who try to cover their sins by their own good works, but although such things may look very good in their own eyes, and perhaps in the eyes of others, we know that nothing we can do will put away one sin from the presence of God. “The wages of sin is death,” and God was about to teach them that the only way they could stand in His presence, was in a covering which He Himself provided through the death of another, a substitute.

God Seeking His Fallen Creature

While clothed in these fig leaf-aprons they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, and they hid among the trees. They were afraid of God, and their aprons did not make them suitable for His presence, and they knew it. Are you hiding from God? Do you feel like running away when someone asks you if you are saved? It is because you are a sinner and need the robe of righteousness which God has provided through the death of His Son. “He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

But God loved His fallen creature, and He began to seek him. Isn’t it wonderful, that the first words God spoke to Adam after his fall were, “Where art thou?” And God has been seeking man ever since, even though men continue to run away and hide from Him. If you are unsaved, God is seeking you and wants to save you.

Blame and Responsibility

God asked Adam some questions because He wanted him to confess his sin, but Adam blamed his wife for it. Perhaps you are trying to blame someone else, or even worse, you may be blaming God as many people do today. But remember this, putting the blame on someone else will not take away the dark stain of sin. Stop blaming others at once, and come to God as a guilty sinner, and you will have all your sins removed. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Then you will not be thinking of who is to blame, but your heart will be filled with thankfulness to God for what He has done for you.

Eve was like her husband, and she blamed the Serpent (Satan). God then cursed the Serpent for what he had done, but He allowed Adam and Eve to hear the wonderful promise that the Seed of woman would bruise the Serpent’s head. The Lord Jesus who was born of a virgin was the promised Seed, and when He died on the cross, He defeated all Satan’s power. Satan is a real person, with real power, but for the believer he is a defeated enemy who cannot harm us as long as we walk in obedience to the Word of God. Soon we will be completely delivered from his power when the Lord Jesus comes and takes us to be forever with Himself.

1. Why did Adam and Eve hide from God among the trees?

2. I suppose that Adam and Eve thought the fig leaves would help them hide their sin from God in some way, but that was obviously foolish. How did other Bible men and women try to cover up their sin? What, for example, did Jacob’s sons do to hide their evil ways with Joseph?

3. You can find lots more on the subject of trying to hide ourselves from God by searching bibletruthlibrary.org. One article entitled Fig Leaves, from Things New and Old, would be a good place to start. You can find it by typing the article number 50451 into the library search box.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 3:1-6: Doubting and Temptation

Adam and Eve were enjoying the beautiful garden together, and how happy they must have been. But the happiness did not last long. They chose to listen to the voice of the serpent (Satan) rather than to the voice of God. God provided everything for them and had given them such wonderful things, while the serpent had not done anything for them. So why should they listen to him? But they did!

How cleverly the serpent asked his question, “Yea hath God said?” He first put a doubt into Eve’s mind by questioning whether God had really spoken. This is always the way Satan begins. He wants you to doubt the Bible, the Word of God, and if he can get you doubting, he will be able to ruin you, as he did Eve. The Christian needs an armor for his spiritual battles, and we are told, “Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16). Never let one doubt enter your mind as to the truth of the Word of God, or Satan’s fiery darts will get in.

Eve Replies in Doubt

Then Eve replied to the serpent by saying, “God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” We can notice two mistakes in her reply. First she added to God’s Word. God hadn’t told them not to touch it, but unbelief adds to God’s Word, as well as taking away from it. Then Eve also said “Lest ye die,” which shows there was a doubt in her mind. But God’s Word was definite, “Ye shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). The serpent saw that she was doubting, and he said, “Ye shall not surely die.” He flatly contradicted what God said.

Satan’s Deception

Satan had his bait all ready, just like a fisherman, so that when they grabbed at it, they would be caught with his hook. He told them they would “be as gods, knowing good and evil.” But he only told them part of the truth, for although they got the knowledge of good and evil (a conscience) when they ate of the fruit, they received a fallen nature, wanting to do evil, and without the power to do good.

Eve listened to Satan, and disobeyed God. She saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise. It all looked good, except for one thing — it was disobedience to God. So dear children, the world with its bright lights, its sinful pleasures, and its famous men and women looks very attractive. But stop a moment. It is Satan who has fixed up the world to take your young hearts away from the Lord, and “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul” (Mark 8:36). If you

listen to the voice of God through His Word, you will have the victory over these temptations. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

1. What were two mistakes Eve made in her reply to the serpent?

2. How did Joseph respond when he was tempted by Potiphar’s wife? How did his problems get bigger at first? How did his obedience turn out in the end?

3. The Problem of Lust by W. MacDonald is a clear and simple brochure related to the topic of temptation and might be helpful to you.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 37:29-38:30: Conscience and Confession

Reuben did not have the courage to rebuke his brothers for their evil ways. He would rather do what he knew to be wrong than “make bad friends.” How often we find young people like this, and it is so sad, for to be a friend of the world is to be the enemy of God. When Reuben came to the pit, he found that Joseph was gone, and he rent his clothes with grief. Instead of confessing his sin as he should have done, he joined with his brothers to make a plan whereby they could hide their wicked act. They did not realize that “he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13). Although they hid their sin from their poor old father, for the time being at least, they did not, and could not, hide it from God.

The Folly of Deceit and Disobedience

Their plan seemed to work out well enough, and they were able to deceive their father, but God has said, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). And though they kept their secret for a long time, God brought it out eventually. How foolish to try to hide anything from God! And yet how many dear young people right now are trying to deceive their parents and other Christians. You may laugh, and try to “pass it off” as they say, but perhaps as you read these lines, your conscience is troubling you and making you miserable. Remember what the Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, who was fighting against the accusings of his conscience: “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” And it is hard! How often it is just pride that keeps us from an open confession, and we remain miserable for months and even years just like Joseph’s brothers.

Then there is another lesson for us in this sad event. Many, many years before this took place, Jacob had deceived his own father, and here his sons did the very same thing to him. How keenly he felt it as he wept and mourned, refusing to be comforted. If you, dear young reader, are deceiving your parents, have it out with the Lord and with them right now, or you, too, will reap it, if the Lord leaves us here. Oh, the folly of trying to go on in disobedience to God and His Word! The law of the Medes and Persians might alter, but God’s Word never will. He has said, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

Every Knee Shall Bow

We spoke earlier of how Joseph’s coat of many colors spoke of the many glories of Christ, and here they took and dipped it in the blood of a kid of the goats. This reminds us of how the Jews put the Lord Jesus to death and trampled all His glory in the dust. How little Joseph’s brothers realized that they were going to have to bow before him as he had dreamed, and that Joseph was going to have a glorious place in spite of all their wicked schemes. So God has decreed that every knee shall bow to His Son (Philippians 2:10). If you bow now, dear reader, you will be saved, but if you refuse, you will bow at the great white throne judgment and be lost forever.

While Joseph was the rejected one, Judah fell into sin and shame, and so today the Jews, having rejected Christ, have a still darker history. The Jews, like Judah, not willing to own their own guilt, would try to place the blame on others. How wonderful in view of all this to see the grace of God, for the scarlet thread on the hand of Zara reminds us of redemption — the only foundation of blessing for either Jew or Gentile.

1. What happened when Reuben went back to the pit where he and his brothers left Joseph?

2. Jacob had deceived his father and had not yet reached full repentance. But the Lord had faithfully worked in his life. How many times had Jacob been deceived by others? How does he react differently on this occasion compared to earlier ones?

3. If you are pondering the issues of discipline in Jacob’s life, or in your own, you might find help reading Discipline: Jacob by W. Kelly. You can find it at bibletruthlibrary.org by doing a Library Search for 65686.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 37:23-28: Suffering and Joy in Obedience

Joseph’s brothers took away his coat of many colors and then cast him into an empty pit. Poor Joseph! He had been obedient, and yet he had to suffer. Yes, children, we often have to suffer if we are obedient to God and His Word, but Peter tells us “if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye” (1 Peter 4:14). I would much rather have been Joseph with all his suffering than one of his wicked brethren. Their time of suffering came later. There is always an inward happiness in pleasing the Lord, but there is nothing more miserable than a bad conscience like Joseph’s brethren had until they finally confessed their sin. Far, far better to suffer than to yield to Satan’s temptations and have a bad conscience and a blighted life.

The Perfect Example of Obedience

We need hardly say that the Lord Jesus, of whom Joseph was a type, is a perfect example of obedience. The Jews sought to rob Him of His coat of many colors — His glories — but He went on patiently doing His Father’s will in spite of all the suffering He had to pass through. Who suffered as He did? And yet in the midst of it all He “rejoiced in spirit” (Luke 10:21), because He found His greatest joy in doing what pleased His Father. Then at the end of His perfect life they took and nailed Him to the cross — not only in a pit like Joseph — and did every horrible

thing they could to Him as He hung there. They spit in His face, crowned Him with thorns, and finally offered Him vinegar to drink, yet He endured it all and said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). What wonderful love He had, even for His enemies who hated Him without a cause.

Religion Without Christ

After Joseph’s brothers had cast him into the pit, they sat down to eat bread. How little they cared for him although he had not done them any harm, but rather showed kindness to them. In this, too, they were like the Jews, who, after crucifying Christ their Messiah, could sit down to eat the passover. Little did they realize the emptiness of the form, without Christ the true Passover, and yet how many there are today who go on with ceremonies and even eat the Lord’s supper while rejecting Him in their hearts. Surely they are bringing condemnation on themselves by such an act. There is nothing more blinding than religion without Christ, and I want to warn you against the empty formalism of the present day. It is hateful to God, as He said to Israel of old, “I hate, I despise your feast days” (Amos 5:21). God wants truth in the inward parts, and nothing that a sinner can do has any value in the sight of God if he is rejecting Christ in his heart.

While Joseph’s brothers were eating bread, a company of Ishmaelites came along, and his brothers sold him to them for twenty pieces of silver. The Lord Jesus, many years later, was sold for thirty pieces of silver “that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18). Poor Joseph was then carried down into Egypt, just as the Lord was sold and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles.

1. What did Joseph’s brothers do after they cast him into the pit?

2. No one naturally delights in suffering. However, in a world of sin it is rather common. Where in the New Testament is a Christian guaranteed that they will experience persecution, a form of suffering?

3. The pamphlet Joy in Suffering by R. Elliott provides some real refreshment for those who are going through difficult times for the Lord.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 37:5-22: Obedience to the Father

Joseph dreamed a most remarkable dream. He dreamed that he was binding sheaves in the field, and that his sheaf arose and stood up while his brother’s sheaves bowed down to his. Then he dreamed again that the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed to him. This made his brothers envy and hate him still more, for they could not help but feel the truth of what he had dreamed. So the Lord Jesus was particularly hated by His brethren the Jews, when He told them of His kingdom and glory and warned them that there was a day coming when they would have to acknowledge it (Matthew 26:64). Although the nation still abides in unbelief, what a wonderful time it will be when that One whom they rejected comes in power to set up His kingdom at Jerusalem. They will gladly bow down to Him in that day; in fact, all shall bow before Him then, even the lost who will be cast into the lake of fire (Philippians 2:10). May the Lord lead any unsaved one who is reading this paper to bow the knee now, and own Him as Lord while it is still the day of His grace. If you do, you will be saved (Romans 10:9), but those who bow at the great white throne judgment will not find any mercy there.

A Willing and Obedient Son

One day Joseph’s father asked him to go and see how his brothers were, and his immediate reply was, “Here am I.” He was a willing and obedient son. In this day of disobedience to parents, it is good to see some children who want to obey the Scripture which says, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:20).

What a beautiful picture we can see in all this of the Lord Jesus, who, at the Father’s word, came down to this ruined world — sent by God His Father in love to poor sinners. He was always willing to do His Father’s will, even to dying on the cross.

Joseph set out to find his brothers who were wandering away from him. At last he found them in Dothan after seeking them for some time. This reminds us of the Lord who is seeking sinners, even though they are wandering farther and farther away from Him. When Joseph’s brothers saw him afar off, even while he was coming to them in love, they were planning to kill him. This makes us think of the Jews when the Lord Jesus was here on earth; for though He went about doing good, healing the sick, and raising the dead, they hated Him and sought to kill Him.

No Man Can Serve Two Masters

We know that the Jews really did kill the Lord Jesus, but in Joseph’s case God graciously intervened, delivering him from death. Reuben suggested that they put Joseph in a pit, hoping to be able to get him out of their hands so he could send him back to his father. Reuben was like a Christian who is in bad company, trying to please his unsaved friends, and please the Lord too. Of course we know that this cannot be done, for the Scripture says, “No man can serve two masters” (Luke 16:13). We must take a clear stand for the Lord or we will be in trouble all the time. A Christian who is trying to be good friends with the world is a most unhappy person, for he is sure to have a bad conscience, and what is more solemn still, the Word of God says, “whosoever ... will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

1. What did Joseph dream?

2. An obedient child is a delight to his parents. How many verses from the book of Proverbs can you find that refer to the obedient or disobedient son?

3. You might find the booklet Obedience: The Saint’s Liberty by J. N. Darby a real eyeopener if your mind has been subtly trained to think of obedience as bondage.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 37:1-4: Godliness in Youth

The first verse of our chapter stands out in marked contrast with the thirty-sixth chapter. Jacob was still a stranger in the land. Let us learn, dear young people, to look at things in the light of eternity, and not as they appear now. Even though the ungodly may prosper now, we know that God's righteous judgment is hanging over this poor Christless world, and why should we heap together treasures in the last days (James 5:3)? They are all going to be destroyed very soon, and only what is of Christ will abide. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

We now begin the history of Joseph. He is one of the most beautiful types of Christ in the Bible, and we need hardly remark that this is the reason God has given us the story of his life in such detail. It is so interesting that even the smallest child can enjoy it, while the oldest believer always finds something new and precious in it.

Temptation in Youth

Joseph was seventeen years old when we begin to read about him. As we look back over the years, we can think of a good many boys and girls whom we have known, who were very regular attendants at Sunday school. They answered the Bible questions, and even spoke nicely about the Lord, until they were about sixteen or seventeen. Then they missed the Sunday school a few times, then quite often, and soon they were seldom, if ever, there. They were too old for that — so they thought! They were wiser than their parents (at least they considered themselves so), and they missed many of the meetings. They dropped off the prayer meetings and the Bible readings, and only came once on Lord's day. Even at that meeting it took very little to keep them away. They found many friends in the world, but very few, if any, were true children of God. Yes, dear young people, sixteen or seventeen is a very decisive age. The world will make a great bid for you just then. Unless you are like the strong young men (or women) of 1 John 2:14, with the Word of God abiding in you, you will not be able to overcome these temptations of the wicked one.

How refreshing, on the other hand, to read of a young man like Joseph, who at the age of seventeen was obedient to his father, and was seeking to please the Lord. God could use an instrument like that, and He did use him in a most remarkable way. What a need there is today of earnest, godly, young men who are willing to give up the world for Christ. Perhaps you will have to stand alone if you choose such a path; Joseph did, and yet he was not alone, for the Lord was with him.

Delight Found in Christ

Joseph's father had a special love for him because of his obedience, and he made him a coat of many colors. Joseph was a type of Christ, and we think of the many glories of Christ and of how God His Father always found His delight in Him. He would have us to find our delight in Christ too, but just as Joseph's brethren hated him, so the Lord Jesus was hated without a cause by his brethren the Jews. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:11-12). Have you received Him into your heart?

1. What made Joseph an instrument God could use?

2. Who else in Scripture stood alone, or nearly alone, when they were young in order to honor God?

3. Young Men of Scripture by W. T. P. Wolston contains the story of Joseph and of other young men who lived to please the Lord. You would probably get real benefit for your soul in reading it.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 35:9-36:43: God's Promises Remembered

God appeared to Jacob at Bethel, telling him again that his name was to be Israel, which means, a prince. God delights to change our names! My name was once Sinner (1 Timothy 1:15), but now it has been changed to Saint (Romans 1:7), because the Lord saved me. Has He changed your name, dear reader? God had not told His own name when He wrestled with Jacob at Peniel, but when Jacob arrived at Bethel, He did. He said, "I am God Almighty." We might say, before going further, that God has made Himself known by different names in the different dispensations. A dispensation is a certain period of time in which God has acted in a certain way. For example, the dispensation of law began when the law was given at Mount Sinai, and ended when the Lord Jesus died at Calvary in order to redeem helpless sinners from its curse, for all had broken it. The patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — knew God as "Almighty." God made Himself known as "Jehovah" to the children of Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. Now we who are saved know God as our "Father," and when the kingdom of Christ is set up on earth during the millennium, God will be known as the "most High."

Joy in the Finished Work

Jacob, after listening afresh to God's wonderful promises of blessing, set up a pillar of stone. He never wanted to forget those promises again, as he had for so long in the past. He then poured a drink offering over it. We all know that offerings had an important place in Old Testament times. They all pointed on to the one perfect sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, and each of the different offerings, such as the burnt offering, the sin offering, and here the drink offering, all tell us of the varied aspects of His work. The drink offering tells us of the joy we find in thinking of His finished work, and the oil poured upon it reminds us that it is by the Spirit of God, who now indwells all believers, that we find this joy (Romans 5:5). Unsaved people do not find any joy in thinking of the work of Calvary because they have never been born again by the Spirit of God.

Blessing in a Coming Day

When Rachel had given birth to Benjamin she died. She called him Benoni, which means the son of my sorrow, but his father called him Benjamin, meaning the son of my right hand. This tells us of the Lord Jesus, who will bring blessing to Israel, and through whom all the promises can be fulfilled. The children of Israel, like Rachel, have been set aside for the time, but in a coming day they will be brought into blessing through Christ — the Son at God's right hand.

We will just make a few remarks about the thirty-sixth chapter. While Jacob and his family were still strangers and pilgrims, Esau and his family were establishing themselves in Mount Seir, and prospering. So it is today. The boy or girl who desires to be faithful to the Lord may not get along so well in this world as the unsaved. The world will never want a faithful testimony to Christ, for it is still the same as when it crucified Him. It hates those who confess His blessed name boldly (1 John 3:13). Esau and his descendants prospered for a time, but when God brings his earthly people Israel into blessing during the millennium, Esau's people will be cut off entirely (Obadiah 1:18).

1. Why did Jacob set up a pillar of stone after he heard the promises of God's blessing?

2. Joy in the finished work of the Lord Jesus should characterize all of God's people. Exodus 15 gives one description of that joy. How did the people thank the Lord for their deliverance?

3. You might find the pamphlet Joy by D. F. Rule an encouragement that sparks your thinking on this happy subject.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 35:1-8: God's Faithfulness to Restore

God reminded Jacob of the cause of his troubles. Why had he fled from his brother Esau? It was because he had deceived his father, and no doubt he remembered all that had happened at that time, and then of how God had appeared to him at Bethel as he slept on his pillow of stones. He would think of all the wondrous promises which God had made there, and of how he had added his "if" to them all. But God had been faithful all through those long years, even though Jacob had been most unfaithful.

Departing From Iniquity

There is nothing like a sense of the grace of God to make us feel our own failure, and so here as soon as Jacob thought of Bethel, he started to set his house in order. He did not think of the strange gods in his house, and the soiled garments they were wearing, until he thought of going to Bethel the house of God. It is a blessed thing to be in a Christian home and to be among the people of God, but it should make us think of that verse "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). We do not worship strange gods in these lands, as they do in heathen countries, but we may allow other things to come between us and the Lord. Friends, school, sports, pleasure, or anything to which we give first place in our hearts instead of the Lord can become a "strange god." Yes, even things that are right in their place can become idols to us if we are not careful. The result of this is that we become "unclean" or defiled with things here. Because of this Jacob told his household to change their garments. We have to change our associations of life when we find they are a hindrance to our getting to Bethel and dwelling there according to the mind of God.

God's Preservation and Care

For the first time in many years Jacob spoke of the goodness of God to his family. He takes his stand faithfully before them, telling of how God had heard his cry and answered him in the day of his distress. The result is seen at once in his home. They gave up all their strange gods and their earrings too!

Perhaps your parents have spoken to you of the conduct and dress which is becoming to a Christian — I trust they have. Are you willing to give up anything and everything which is not pleasing to the Lord? Are you willing to do as Jacob did, and bury such things out of sight? Jacob hid them under an oak tree, and leaving them all behind, he journeyed on. Paul had things in his life which he once counted "gain," but after he was saved, the knowledge of Christ made him say, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Philippians 3:7). He had a new object in life — Christ.

Jacob's family had acted very badly with those at Shechem, but God was gracious to him and kept the cities around from harming him as he journeyed to Bethel. As soon as he arrived there, he built an altar to God — the God of Bethel, reminding himself once again of how God had preserved and cared for him. We should never tire of thinking about what the Lord has done for us, and when we get to glory, we shall sing of the blood that redeemed us for all eternity. Will you be there to join in that song?

1. What did Jacob do as soon as he thought of Bethel?

2. Clothing in the Word of God is symbolic. What does it represent?

3. The Call of the Bride by W. T. P. Wolston contains a chapter entitled The Bride's Raiment that you would probably find interesting on this subject of clothing.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 34:1-35:1: Walking in His Ways

What a sad picture we see in the thirty-fourth chapter! Poor scheming and planning Jacob got into plenty of trouble with his family. No doubt there are lessons for us all here, and since most of our readers are children and young people, it will help you a great deal to learn them now, for if you do, you will be spared many a sorrow. If you are truly saved, the Lord will bring you safely home to glory, but if you choose to walk in willful ways, He will have to bring you by a hard way as He did Jacob. How much happier it would be to walk in His ways and take Him into all your plans, asking His guidance, and seeking His help. It is becoming harder to be faithful, for the world holds out so many attractions, but they will soon leave you alone if you try to follow Christ. Remember, however, that you are not alone, for the Lord does not call upon us to go out from the world's company, but to "come out," showing that He is outside, too, and He will be our Friend and Companion — yes, a Father to us in such a position (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). He will also lead us to true companions, though perhaps few in number, who fear the Lord and walk in His ways (Psalm 119:63).

Blameless and Without Rebuke

Jacob and his family were ready to settle down and dwell with these Hivites, marrying with them too, but God did not allow it. However, the means which He used to prevent it and make them move on to Bethel were very sad and dishonoring to His Name. It was only the goodness and grace of God which kept the nations around from cutting them off. It is a bad thing when the evil things which our enemies say about us are true; but it is all right as long as their evil reports are false. Many of our troubles as Christians come from our mean, inconsiderate, and thoughtless ways. How different it was with Daniel. Even his enemies had to admit that there was no error or fault in him except that he trusted in the Lord. May this be true of us! Let us be sure that those at school or at work cannot say that we are unfair, discourteous, or mean. If they hate us because we are true to Christ and confess His Name, then God tells us to “rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12).

Full Obedience

“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” Jacob had built an altar in a city of Shechem, but God wanted him in Bethel. Don’t we often do things which we know to be wrong and then try to quiet our consciences by thinking that as long as we are regular at the meetings, everything will be all right? We are something like Jacob, trying to content ourselves in a place like Shechem, when we know God wants full obedience. And yet how gracious of the Lord to speak to Jacob at this time. Oh, that we were more willing to hear His voice, for He speaks to us even when we are careless in our ways.

God not only wanted Jacob to go up to Bethel but to dwell there. He reminded him, too, of how He had appeared to him there twenty years previously, for God had not changed even though Jacob had.

1. What did God tell Jacob to do in Bethel?

2. How does God sometimes uproot us from where we feel comfortable to get us to move closer to Himself? What did God use in Moses’ life to get him to leave the court of Pharaoh?

3. You can find out more about the meaning of Bethel by looking it up in the Concise Bible Dictionary by G. Morrish.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 32:25-32: The Blessing of the Lord

When the day began to break, Jacob asked the Lord to bless him. For a long time he had been taking things into his own hands, trying to work out his own plans, but now at last he seeks blessing from the Lord. How good to know that “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Proverbs 10:22). Too often we try to get blessing in paths of our own choosing, and the Lord has to allow something like this wrestling with Jacob to make us see that His ways are best for us.

Worship and Fellowship

Jacob’s thigh went out of joint while wrestling, and for the rest of his life he was lame — he “halted upon his thigh.” However, there is something very beautiful in what God tells us about him in Hebrews 11:21. “By faith Jacob when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.” Jacob never forgot what happened at Peniel, for it taught him dependence, and he had to lean on the top of his staff; but in that position he could be what he never had been in Padan-aram — a worshipper.

Peniel means “the face of God,” and there are two important points here which we should notice. First Jacob had to get to Peniel before he could get to Bethel. When a believer has left the assembly where the Lord has placed His Name, it often takes some time for him to get back, and he must be restored in soul to the Lord — must be before “the face of God” alone, before he can get back with the Lord’s people (at Bethel, the house of God) in happy fellowship again.

God Made Known

This brings us to the second point. Jacob asked the Lord to tell him His Name, but the Lord did not do so, though He did bless him, saying that Jacob’s name was to be called Israel (a prince). Jacob was not yet in the place where God could make Himself known to him, and though the daybreak came, and a blessing with it, there were still some lessons to be learned of God’s abundant grace, and of the wretchedness of self, before God could tell Jacob His own Name. It is well to have these things clearly before us, for God delights to bless His people, but we often hinder the blessing by thinking more of our own honor than of God’s glory, which must always come first in all His ways.

No doubt after Jacob had met Esau, he would say something similar to the lines written by a dear sister in the Lord many years ago.

Poor Jacob’s heart had been filled with doubts and fears as he thought of meeting his brother Esau, but how wonderful is the grace of God. No one can do any harm to His people, or even speak an unkind word to them unless the Lord allows it. He can make even our enemies to be at peace with us when our ways please Him (Proverbs 16:7), or He can stir up adversaries if there is a needs-be (1 Kings 11:14, 23). It is all as He sees best, and the great thing for us to do is to be exercised that our ways are pleasing to the Lord and then to confidently leave all in His hands.

1. What did Jacob learn from what happened at Peniel?

2. Simple dependence on the Lord is a wonderful lesson to learn. The Lord Jesus as a man showed a wonderful dependence on God His Father. How does the story in Luke 4 showcase the Lord’s complete dependence?

3. You might find the short article Dependence by F. G. Burkitt found at bibletruthlibrary.org to be quite helpful to you. You can navigate to the page for that author and then select this article taken from Christian Truth.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 32:21-24: Alone With God

How do you like to be alone with God, dear reader? No doubt if you are unsaved, it would make you very afraid, and Satan, the enemy of our souls, will do all he can to keep you from it. He will try to keep you so busy with other things such as school, work, or pleasure, that you will not have any time to think about eternity. Your sins make you fear the presence of God, and Satan knows that if you feel how awful they are in God's sight, you will never rest until you know that they are gone. In spite of your busy life, we would ask you, dear unsaved reader, to get quietly before God on your knees right now. You will find that although He hates your sins, He loves you, and in love He has provided salvation for lost sinners. His Word declares that "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). When you have received Him as your Saviour, then you will know that your sins are gone, and you will be able to rejoice in His presence and feel at home on your knees before Him.

Wrestling With the Lord

In our chapter we find that after Jacob had sent his wives and all that he had over the brook Jabbok, he himself was left alone, and yet he was not alone, for "there wrestled a man with him until the break of day." An unsaved person, as we have remarked, is afraid of the presence of God, but it is also sadly true that even a believer, if careless in his ways, will feel uneasy when alone with God. Sin always makes cowards of us, and Jacob, though a man of faith, had unconfessed sin in his life which made him very unhappy.

Perhaps some of our readers may be wondering why the Lord wrestled with Jacob. Now Jacob had been away from the Lord in his soul for twenty years, and God was working in His own way to bring him back. God's way of restoring him was not an easy one, for often the Lord has to deal very sternly with His own in order to bring them back to Himself, but it is always in love. It is "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth" (Hebrews 12:6). He loves His children too well to allow them to go on in their own ways, and if the Lord is allowing trouble in your life, dear reader, it is because He loves you just as He loved Jacob through all those twenty years of failure. He was wrestling with Jacob in order to bring the "break of day" into his life. Long before this the sun had set upon him and he had laid down to sleep, but here at last the sun arose, and the day broke upon him.

The Full Joy of Salvation

If the one who reads these lines is away from the Lord, there is a message for you in our chapter. Do not go on one moment longer without getting alone in your room with God. He wants to wrestle with you, and bring "the break of day" into your life. Will you, too, be in earnest and "wrestle in prayer" with God, admitting all that has come in? Hide nothing, for He knows it all. He loves you and wants you to have the joy of His salvation. He wants your joy to be full, and it cannot be while you are going after the empty and sinful pleasures of this poor world. One who is saved is spoiled for this world, because he has changed his citizenship. He belongs to Heaven, and his home is there.

1. What happened to Jacob after he sent his wives and all that he had over the brook Jabbok?

2. The king Manasseh had a very wicked life. However, the Lord used some extreme circumstances in his life to eventually bring him to repentance. What did the Lord use to restore Manasseh?

3. The simple pamphlet Repentance by H. P. Barker is a wonderul introduction to that vital subject.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 32:1-20: The Lord First

Jacob started out again on his way to return to Canaan. It was not, however, going to be an easy path, for when we are away from the Lord, the way back is sometimes quite difficult, though there is blessing at the end. Here the angels of God met him. God was still caring for His wayward child and leading him step by step to the place where He would have him. But Jacob had to meet his brother Esau, whom he had treated so badly, and this made him very uneasy. If you have wronged someone, dear reader, be assured you will never be happy in your soul until the matter is cleared up. This long period of twenty years did not change it, and Jacob, conscious of his guilt and forgetting the unchanging grace of God, speaks of Esau as "my lord." Yes, he was afraid of Esau, for we always lose the enjoyment of our standing in grace when we allow such things as Jacob did in our own lives. We will be afraid of the world, if we do not walk to please the Lord. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1). If we want to have that holy boldness before God and men, we must learn to judge anything in our lives that is displeasing to the Lord and walk uprightly before Him. When we try to cover things up, or pass over them lightly, we will soon find the truth of God's Word, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Fearing God Over Man

Jacob had never really been before God about what he had done, and in his usual scheming way he decided to send a present to Esau in order to find favor in his sight. He got everything well arranged, but he was still "greatly afraid and distressed." It is always that way when we try to settle things in our own way without a full confession before the Lord. Two wrongs never make a right, and it is useless to try to undo our mistakes in any other way than God's way, which is to get into His presence admitting all to Him.

After Jacob had made all his plans, he then asked God to bless them. How often we do the same thing! He should have prayed first, and then the Lord would have shown him what to do, taking away his fear of Esau too. He knew God as the God of Abraham and Isaac — blessed fact — but He was also the God of Jacob, though Jacob did not lay hold of that. He was thinking of himself and his own unworthiness, and although he spoke of God's promises in his prayer, he did not confide in them. He feared Esau more than he feared God. So it is when we are away from the Lord, for we have our eyes on self and on the difficulties instead of just trusting the God of all grace.

Living for Him

What a large present of goats, rams, camels, cows and other animals he was going to give Esau, but in the past twenty years of Jacob's life we never read of him giving one thing to the Lord. Surely this should be a lesson for us. Are you, dear reader, starting out in life thinking entirely

of your own interests? If the Lord leaves you here, are you going to have to look back on twenty, or perhaps more, wasted years? If you are really one of His own, you can never be lost, and His grace will follow you as it did Jacob, but if you want to have a useful life for the Lord Jesus who has done so much for you, then begin today to live for Him. You will never regret having put the Lord first.

1. Why was Jacob afraid of Esau?

2. What does it mean to “live in the fear of man”? How does this get us into trouble?

3. You can find a nice, simple quote on “the fear of God” by going to bibletruthlibrary.org and doing a Library Search for Article Number 88248.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 31:43-55: Fellowship and Remembrance

How wonderfully we can trace the overruling goodness of God in caring for His poor, failing child Jacob. Surely this should strengthen our hearts and give us to realize that the Lord never changes in His love for His people. It is good for us to look back from time to time and trace the goodness of God in our lives and then to thank Him. Then we can raise our “Mizpah” like Jacob and say, “The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.” We know He will watch over us and care for us all along the way. There is a word here for any of our dear young people who are leaving home to go to school or to work. You can count on His loving care for yourself, and for your loved ones, while you are separated from them. Let us remember also that the Lord watches us, and we need to walk before Him if we are going to have His blessing.

Just a little word before we leave this touching scene. Jacob “offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread” before they parted. How happy it would make your parents and loved ones if, before you parted and left them for your path in life, they had the assurance that you were truly saved — that the one Perfect Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary had put your sins away. What an immense blessing it would be, both to yourself and to them, knowing that while you are “absent one from another” there would be a meeting day coming, and if not here on earth, it would be in the glory above.

Remembering the Lord in His Death

Then too, “they did eat bread” before they parted, and surely this would bring to our minds how the early disciples met together on the first day of the week to “break bread” (Acts 20:7). They did this in answer to the Lord’s dying request to His own, “This do in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). Perhaps your parents know that you are under the shelter of the precious blood of Christ, and no doubt this has made them very happy, but have you stopped there? If you have, you are missing a great deal, for the Lord Jesus who gave Himself for you has asked His own to remember Him till He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). Can we deny Him the desire of His heart? You cannot tell what joy it will give the Lord, as well as to the hearts of your loved ones, to know that you are both sheltered by “the Sacrifice” and “eating the bread” (saved, and remembering the Lord in His death) until it is true in your own life. Do not do it just to please others — no, never — but how much happier the parting would be if you were truly seeking to please the Lord in this, as well as in all you do. So here, after this had taken place, “Laban rose up and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned to his place.” As far as we know from the Scriptures, he never saw them again, but no doubt that what took place there at Mizpah would often come back to his mind, and comfort his heart, as well as the hearts of his children.

1. What did Jacob do before he departed?

2. Jacob and Laban had this one last opportunity to “eat bread” together. Why does the Lord want us to remember Him often, such as every first day of the week?

3. If you’ve been thinking on the subject of remembering the Lord, you might find listening to the Audio CD The Lord’s Table, the Lord’s Supper, and the Camp by J. N. Hyland a help in getting the subject clear in your soul.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 31:13-42: Restoration

God called Himself “the God of Bethel.” He brought Jacob right back to the point where he had gone to sleep and when the sun had set upon him. If we wander away from the Lord, we have to go back to the point of departure before there can be restoration. Bethel means the house of God, and when we get away from the place where the Lord has placed His Name, there is sure to be failure come in. When David had sinned, he could say, “He [the Lord] restoreth my soul” (Psalm 23:3), and this the Lord is willing to do for any of His erring children.

The Necessary Steps to Restoration

There are three things we should notice here, as they are the necessary steps to restoration. First, there must be an awakening in the conscience as to where we are, and this is the result of letting God speak to us as He did to Jacob, only that He now speaks to us through His Word.

Then the next thing was, “Get thee out of this land.” We that are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus should get out, and stay out, of anything that is not pleasing to the Lord. We have to “cease to do evil” before we can “learn to do well” (Isaiah 1:16-17). If you are connected with something which you know to be displeasing to the Lord, then the word to Jacob is for you too, “Get thee out … ”

The third step for Jacob was, “Return unto the land of thy kindred.” God was calling him to get out of Haran because He wanted to bring him to a better land — the land of Canaan, and so the reason He calls us to give up the things of this world is because we are going to a Better Land above. We who are saved are part of the family of faith, and we should choose their company (“our kindred”) even as we shall share it forever in the glory with Christ.

Strangers in This World

Rachel and Leah realized, like Jacob, that there was no part for them in Haran. They said, “Are we not counted … as strangers?” It is a good thing when even young believers learn that we are strangers in this world. If we do not learn it by walking in the love of God, then He has to allow trials, and teach us the hard way. So here, after God had allowed a few difficulties to arise, then Rachel and Leah said, “Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.” It sometimes takes a long time for us to be made willing to obey the voice of God.

At last they started off on their journey, but it certainly was not the right thing for them to “steal away” without even saying “good-bye.” Sometimes we do a right thing, but we do it in the wrong way. If we have to part company with some friend who is hindering us from pleasing the Lord, we should be courteous about it, and tell them why we are doing it. These little things in the Christian’s life (which many of us forget) are very important and are honoring to the Lord. Rachel was very wrong in stealing the images from her father too, but our consciences can become very lax and careless about many things when we are away from the Lord in our souls.

Laban then pursued after Jacob, intending to do him harm, but the Lord overruled and told him not to. Laban told Jacob that he should not have gone away secretly, and Jacob admitted that he had the fear of man in his heart which made him afraid. How much better if he had had the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom!

1. Why did God call Jacob out of Haran?

2. God is continually at work for our blessing. There is no moment of any day that He isn’t doing exactly what is needed for our true joy. How did the Lord use Laban’s pursuit of Jacob to do Jacob good?

3. The book God’s Restoring Grace by W. T. P. Wolston provides a simple and brief introduction to the wonderful subject of how the Lord reaches down and works to restore our souls when we have wandered away from the Good Shepherd.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 29:27-31; Genesis 30: Grace Magnified in Failure

Laban told Jacob that if he would serve him another seven years, he could have Rachel for his wife. God does not approve of a man having more than one wife, but in the Old Testament, before God had given a full revelation of Himself, He allowed it, though He never approved of it. This He showed in the beginning when He made one wife for Adam, saying at that time that a man was to “leave his father and his mother, and … cleave unto his wife” (Genesis 2:24). God always shows His purposes in the beginning of a thing when He sets it up, then bearing in patience with the failure when things fall into decline. Everything that has been committed to man in responsibility has ended in failure and ruin, but this only tends to magnify the grace of God.

God was good to Leah in spite of the fact that Jacob did not love her as he should have, and God gave her many sons.

Jacob went on with his scheming, and since he was the head of his home, his whole household took on the same character. How careful this should make us as parents, for our children will copy our actions much more than we are inclined to think. Jacob’s way of doing things could never have God’s approval, but God overruled and accomplished His own purposes in spite of Jacob’s failure. Then, too, it shows us that in the coming day when the twelve tribes will be brought into blessing on the earth, it will be all of grace. Not one of us who are reading this little book will get to heaven because of any good in ourselves. We will be praising and thanking God through all eternity that it was only His grace and goodness that brought us there at all, for we deserved nothing but judgment.

God’s Goodness and Blessingin Spite of Failure

Laban had to admit that God had blessed him for Jacob’s sake. Even though Jacob was such a failure, God proved Himself to be a God of perfect goodness and protected him. He then put the desire in Jacob’s heart to return to the land of Canaan, for that was the land of promised blessing. God used very unusual circumstances to bring Jacob back. When we are not walking quietly with God as Abraham had been, then God has to use the “bit and bridle” (Psalm 32:9), bringing unpleasant events into our lives in order to make us to go where He wants us. How much better to let Him speak to us through His Word, than to make it necessary for God to guide us like “horses and mules!”

When Laban saw that Jacob was getting together so many possessions, he was not favorable toward him as before. Jacob then told his wives that the Lord had told him to return to his country, telling them, too, how Laban their father had deceived him and changed his wages ten times. He did not, however, mention how he had deceived his own father, for as yet there had not been any self judgment, nor any real sense of his guilt. He was only out to protect his own interests. It makes one think of the verse, “The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord” (Proverbs 19:3). Dear boys and girls, how often we do things we know are wrong, and then when trouble comes, we say that we do not know why the Lord is allowing it. If we want God to bless us, we must walk in obedience to His Word.

1. What happened to Jacob’s household as a result of his continued scheming?

2. Just as Jacob got deceived because he himself was a deceiver, we, too, often experience the same kind of trouble that we cause. How did David experience God’s government for the adultery and murder that he had done?

3. We can be so thankful that the Lord shows grace as well as judgment. You would no doubt enjoy the combination of the two if you were to read God’s Grace and God’s Government by P. Wilson.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 28:13-29:26: Sovereign Grace of God

While Jacob was dreaming he saw the Lord standing at the top of the ladder, and He said to him, “I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.” He then promised to bless Jacob adding that “in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” The promised

Seed was Christ who will bring blessing to all nations. God said also that He would not leave Jacob until all His promises were fulfilled. The descendants of Jacob (the Jews) are suffering today, but God has not forgotten these oft-repeated promises and will fulfill them in His own time which is now drawing near.

All Owed to God

When Jacob wakened from his sleep, he was afraid. His unconfessed sin made him fear the presence of God and call it a dreadful place. Then he took the stones and made a pillar, over the top of which he poured oil saying that that was to be God's house. He owned in this way that worship was due to the Lord, but his faith was weak, and he began to bargain with God. He said, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God." Jacob said that he would do certain things for God if God would do certain things for him. God had already promised to do these very things for Jacob, not because Jacob deserved them, but because of His own sovereign grace. He had said, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land," but Jacob adds his "IF" to it all. When God speaks, we never need to add our "if" to His Word, but Jacob was still a schemer. He had bargained with Esau for his birthright, deceived his father to get the blessing, and he even tried to bargain with God.

Jacob then said that he would give God a tenth, but we should give Him more than that, for we are only stewards of all the Lord has given us. Nor should we give to Him on certain conditions which we choose to make ourselves. We owe all to Him because of His sovereign grace to us when we deserved nothing but judgment.

Reaping What Is Sown

At last Jacob arrived at Haran where his uncle Laban lived. He stood by a well of water where the shepherds watered their flocks and made enquiries as to where he could find Laban. While he was speaking, Laban's daughter Rachel came to the well with her father's sheep. The women, however, were in the habit of waiting until the rest of the shepherds gathered together and then they watered their sheep, because they were unable to roll away the stone themselves. Jacob, therefore, rolled back the stone, watered the sheep, and introduced himself to Rachel as her father's sister's son. He was then welcomed to Laban's house, and after being there for a month, Laban offered to give him wages if he would work for him. Jacob said he would work seven years for him if he could have Rachel for his wife, so this was agreed upon. However, Jacob's reaping time must come, and he was deceived by his uncle, just as he had deceived his own father Isaac. After serving the seven years for Rachel, Laban gave him Leah. Let us remind ourselves once again, dear children, that God's Word is still true. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

1. Why was Jacob afraid when he awoke from his sleep?

2. See if you can find the proverb that tells you about the wicked fleeing and the righteous being bold like a lion. Once you've found it, can you relate it carefully to the part of Jacob's life described in this chapter?

3. You can find lots more about the life of Jacob if you are willing to dig a little bit more deeply into it. Search bibletruthlibrary.org by selecting the author W. Kelly and then go to the page with the titles of his various books. That will lead you to a book entitled Jacob with 26 chapters that develop the life of the patriarch in detail.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 28:1-12: Learning in the School of God

The life of Jacob is one of the most interesting records of the grace of God to be found in the Bible. God has been pleased to tell us a great deal about poor Jacob, and more than that, God calls Himself the God of Jacob more often than the God of either Abraham or Isaac. Every time we read about God being the God of Jacob, it tells us of His grace that blesses in spite of all our failure.

The Path of Faith and Obedience

Isaac told Jacob not to take a wife of the daughters of the land, but to choose one of his own kindred — that is of the family of faith. No doubt your father and mother have been telling you that you should not take a life partner from the unsaved people around, whom you meet day by day. Perhaps you are inclined to think that such a path is difficult and that there are few to choose from. Jacob found this too, and he had to go a long way to get his wife, and things were anything but easy. The path of faith is not easy. It is a rough path, but there is always blessing at the end. Jacob obeyed his father and mother in this matter. Are you going to do the same, dear young Christian?

Esau, on the other hand, was very willful in his disobedience and refused to hearken to the voice of his parents. Even though he knew that they did not want him to choose a wife of the daughters of the land, he went out and married one of them. He would have liked to receive the blessing from his father, but he surely did not honor his parents as God says we should.

Jacob was a man of faith, but he had a great deal to learn in the school of God. Perhaps some of our readers are wondering what the school of God is, for you did not know He had one. Yes, God has a school, and the moment we are saved we enter it. He has many things to teach us, and being very patient, He will never expel us from His school; nor can we ever graduate as long as we are in this world, for there are many things to learn, and it takes a lifetime to learn them.

Fresh Reminders of Love and Grace

Jacob started out from Beersheba and went toward Haran, and while he was traveling along, the sun set and the darkness overtook him. How many a young Christian who goes on well for a time, comes to a place like Jacob where the sun sets and he lays down to sleep. Jacob had stones for his pillow! Such is the path of one who is going on with unconfessed sin in his life as Jacob was. There is no comfort in such a course for the pillows are made of stones!

God sometimes speaks in dreams, though we have to test even our dreams by the word of God. Here God spoke to Jacob through a dream, and what wonderful promises He made to him. When we are getting away from the Lord, how often He sends us some fresh reminder of His love and grace in order to recall our wandering hearts and feet. The ladder stretched up to heaven which Jacob saw with angels of God ascending and descending upon it, points on to the time when Christ will reign in power. Then the heavenly Jerusalem will be over the earthly Jerusalem, and the redeemed in heaven will reign with Christ carrying out His righteous government in the earth instead of the angels who are now God's "ministering spirits" (see Hebrews 1:14; 2:5-7; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

1. In what way did Esau disobey his parents?

2. Why can we be thankful that the Lord doesn't make it easy for us when we are going our own way and rejecting His direction for our life? What would happen to us if He didn't act to stop us?

3. Thinking about Jacob's life reminds us of how important it is to obey. Obedience and Submission: Healing Principles by J. H. Smith is an excellent pamphlet for laying out the simple and essential value of obedience to God and the authority He has placed in our lives.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 27:28-46: The Fulfillment of God's Word

We should notice here that the blessing Jacob received from his father was an earthly blessing and tells us of what is in store for the nation of Israel in a coming day. This promise and many others will have a full fulfillment when the Lord Jesus Christ reigns in power over the earth in a coming day. Jerusalem will then be the center of earthly glory and blessing. Moreover it is true even now that God blesses the nations which befriend the Jews, and curses those who persecute them. We might mention, however, that the blessings of those who are saved during this present period of grace, which began at the day of Pentecost and will end when the Lord Jesus calls His own to meet Him in the air, are heavenly blessings. We should not expect "the fatness of the earth." God has only promised us food and raiment (1 Timothy 6:8), although He often exceeds His promises, blessing us even in temporal things far beyond this.

Failure Overruled

After Jacob had received the blessing of the firstborn, then Esau came in from hunting, made his savoury meat, and brought it to Isaac his father. Poor Isaac! No wonder he "trembled very exceedingly," but God in His goodness seemed to reveal to him that He had overruled his failure, and he said to Esau, "I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him [Jacob] yea, and he shall be blessed."

Esau then broke down and cried. He had sold his birthright some years before, and now it was too late to get it back. What a day of weeping it will be for those who have sold their "birthright" and rejected Christ, when they find the door of mercy shut, and shut forever. Here Esau received a measure of blessing, but if you are unsaved, dear reader, there will be no blessing for you — never, never, never. Oh, do come to Christ today.

Contention Between Esau and Jacob

Esau's descendants are the Edomites, and Isaac's prophecy is now being fulfilled, "By thy sword shalt thou live ... and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." The Jews are the descendants of Jacob, and they are suffering at the hands of their enemies today, but things will change before long, for the Lord's coming is near, and after that, He will take up His people (the Jews) again and Jacob shall rule. Nothing can hinder the fulfillment of God's Word, dear children. Men may say that the Bible is outdated and untrue, but let us assure you that it will be fulfilled to the very letter when all the books written by men have been burned up. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

Bitter hatred and murder filled Esau's heart, and he said he would kill Jacob as soon as his father had died. Rebekah, who had had her part in deceiving Isaac, then told Jacob to go down to Laban, his uncle, and remain there until Esau's anger had passed over. God was over these circumstances, and Rebekah had to reap what she had sown with sorrow, for Jacob did not return home again until after her death, and so she never saw him again. She told him to stay for only a few days, but he did not return for twenty long years.

1. What did Esau do after he found out Isaac had blessed Jacob?

2. Our actions have long-lasting consequences for bad but also for good. What were the results of Caleb's decision not to complain against his fellow Israelites when he was forced to go through the wilderness with them for nearly 40 extra years?

3. The Patriarchs by J. G. Bellett is a lengthy book but packed with very sweet meditations on the beauty of the Lord's ways with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others in the book of Genesis. If you've never read it, then you're in for a treat. You can read it for free by going to bibletruthlibrary.org and selecting Bellett from the Authors section. You'll then get a selection of his books and can select the one entitled The Patriarchs.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 27:1-27: Grace Over-Abounding Sin

Isaac's spiritual, as well as his physical sight, became dim in his old age, for we will always find that if there is any unjudged sin in our lives when we are young, it will become more apparent as we grow older. Isaac had loved venison, and loved Esau because of his venison, for many long years but now this fleshly desire almost caused him to make a great mistake. In fact, he would have missed the mind of God entirely if God had not come in and prevented it. The way in which God came in was surely very humbling to Isaac, but it reminds us once again of the faithfulness and grace of God in spite of all our failures.

Grace Abounds

Isaac asked Esau to make him savoury meat, and said that he would then bless him before he died. He seemed to forget how God had ordained that the blessing was to rest on Jacob his younger son and not on Esau (see Genesis 25:23). Jacob as usual planned and schemed, and this time his mother was with him in it. God would have seen to it that Jacob received the promised blessing in His own time, and it was not necessary for Jacob to deceive his poor old father to get it. There was nothing of faith in such an act, and we need hardly say that both Rebekah and Jacob had to reap bitterly for it. God overruled their plan, however, even though He did not, and could not, approve of it. In fact, this is the whole message of the Bible from cover to cover. It is where sin abounded that grace did much more abound (Romans 5:20). Man's record has always been one of sin — yes, sin abounding, while God's record has always been one of grace over-abounding all mankind's sin. Surely no one but God could write such a book as the Bible, telling of His own divine love rising to its highest peak at the cross of Calvary, even when the heart of man came out at its worst. Yes, when man did his worst, then God did His best!

Blessing in the Path of Obedience

Jacob should not have told a lie even though his mother told him to do it. In this instance, he should have obeyed God first, for His Word says, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 12:22). She told him to get a kid of the goats, and she would make the savoury meat which his father wanted. Then she put skins on Jacob's hands and neck so that he would feel like his hairy brother Esau, and clothing him in Esau's hunting suit, she sent him in to his father to get the blessing. How one lie leads to another and one deception to another! How much better to walk in "the paths of uprightness" and leave all the results with God, but Jacob told one lie after another and, strangely enough, he seemed to get what he wanted. But he only seemed to, for he reaped the results of this all his life. He was deceived by his uncle Laban many times — not just once — and then when he was old, his own sons deceived and lied to him. True, he got the blessing, but he would have got it without all this sorrow if he had waited God's time.

These things may well be a lesson to us, for we are much like Jacob at times. We have plans of our own, and although we may not go as far as he did in deception, we sometimes try to get the blessing in a path of disobedience. Remember, dear young reader, that the path of obedience is the path of happiness. God often tests His children's faith, but He will always prove Himself worthy of all our trust.

1. What did Jacob's mother tell him to do for him to get the blessing from his father?

2. How did the types of lies that started in the life of Abraham grow in the life of Isaac and become even more elaborate in the life of Jacob?

3. In Twig the Collie by C. Massey, one of the two main characters digs himself a deeper and deeper hole with his lies. They all begin to unravel toward the end of the story and present a clear warning against lying lips that is healthy to hear. Besides that, there are many other important lessons in the book that make it well worthwhile.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 26:19-35: Keeping Good Company

After Isaac had digged out all his father's wells, then his servants dug another one — a well of springing water. There is progress here. We cannot stand still in the things of God, for if we are not growing in our souls, we are sure to go backward. The new well is a special cause of contention. How the enemy hates to see the children of God making progress! Notice they say, "The water is ours," not "The well is ours." Unsaved people do not want Christ, the Source from which all blessings flow, but they like to get the blessings. No doubt there could have been more energy displayed on the part of Isaac, in contending for these wells, for God had said, "Sojourn in this land, and I will ... bless thee." However the Lord graciously undertook for him, allowing him to have other wells until he finally got back to Beersheba. There a covenant was made, as Abimelech had made with Abraham previously, to have peaceful possession of that part of the land. May the Lord give us the energy of faith to go on possessing more of what is ours in Christ, even though there are "many adversaries."

It is a good thing indeed when others see in us as Abimelech observed about Isaac, that the Lord was with him even though they hated him. If we walk honorably and blamelessly, but do not confess Christ, we escape His reproach; or if we talk well but walk badly, we bring reproach on His Name. God would have us to talk of Christ, and walk to please Him too; then we will bear His reproach, and bring honor to His worthy Name.

Companionship

When Esau was forty years old, he took a wife of the daughters of the land. We often read of periods of forty days, and forty years in the Bible. The children of Israel spent forty years in the wilderness; Moses spent forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years on the backside of the desert, and forty days on the mount. Other cases could be given too. It is always looked upon as a period of testing, and so here we can see the true state of Esau's heart. Dear young Christian, weigh this statement well, and even the younger folks can remember it when they grow older: "The partner you choose for life will show your state of soul more than anything else." If you walk with God, He will lead you to the right one, for be assured it will mold your whole life for good or bad to a tremendous degree. No wonder Esau's choice to marry wives from among the idolatrous people of the land was a grief of mind to his father and mother.

If you belong to the Lord, dear reader, be careful of the company you keep. There is a good verse in Psalm 119:63 for us all to remember, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." Our intentions may be ever so good, but we are only safe as we "cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart" and learn to walk in the path of obedience day by day. Then when the time of decision comes, we will be able to say like Abraham's servant, "I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Genesis 24:27).

1. How did the Lord graciously undertake for Isaac?

2. A companion for life can have a huge impact on our spiritual lives. How did a bad companion affect Ahab? How did a good wife encourage Aquila?

3. The pamphlet Companionship in Courtship and Marriage: Part 2 by B. Anstey gives a wonderful encouragement to allowing the Lord to make the choice of our life's companion.

Isaac failed in the same way as his father had done when among the Philistines many years before. Whenever any one of us tries to go on with the world, we, too, deny our proper relationship to Christ, just as Isaac denied Rebekah his wife in our chapter. We find, however, if true Christians, that we cannot go on this way indefinitely. It must come out. A real believer can never deny Christ from his heart, and so here Abimelech saw Isaac enjoying his wife's company. He truly loved her in spite of his lip denial, just as Peter loved his Lord although his lips denied Him. God used Abimelech to rebuke Isaac for the lie he had told, and surely this was a humbling experience. May the Lord help us to walk in such a way that we do not bring dishonor on His blessed name.

Isaac had planned to go down into Egypt to escape the famine, but when he listened to the voice of the Lord, and remained in the land, the Lord blessed him. He had his testing and trial, discovering his own weakness, but God was faithful and gave him a wonderful harvest. He could never have expected to reap an hundredfold in Egypt. Egypt, which speaks to us of this world in its glory, is a poor place to go to get out of trouble. Isaac proved that the path of obedience was the best.

Wells of Joy in the Lord

The Lord's blessing upon Isaac made him the object of the envy of the Philistines. When the Lord is blessing one of His children, the enemy often brings on a special attack, and we need to be on guard. When Job was prospering so wonderfully, Satan was preparing his great assault. When Peter was on the mount, he made one of his worst blunders and would have put the Lord on the level of Moses and Elias. Here, too, when Isaac had increased in wealth and been blessed so richly, he neglected to look after the wells his father Abraham had digged, and the Philistines had filled them up with earth. Many of our young readers have Christian fathers and mothers who have digged "wells." Yes, they have taught us the truth from childhood, and the Philistines, who typify the flesh, have been filling up these wells while we have been resting on our oars and thinking all is well. We need to be on our guard all the time, for there will always be warfare as long as we are in this world, and Satan knows our unguarded points. He wants to rob us of our "wells" — our joy in the Lord — and then he can lead us still farther away from Him. If we are not finding our happiness in Christ, we will assuredly be seeking it elsewhere, because we all want happiness. No one wants to be miserable!

At last Abimelech asked Isaac to leave, because he said, "Thou art much mightier than we." Yes, we read in 1 John 4:4, "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world," and the world knows it! Let us draw on our blessed source of strength in Christ, and we will have the victory. In the energy of faith Isaac digged again his father's wells, which the Philistines had filled up and called them by the same names as his father had called them. The great tendency today is to say that times have changed and to try to make the truth more popular by calling things by different names. God's truth does not change with man's changing ideas. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

1. What happened when Isaac neglected to look after the wells Abraham dug?

2. The Philistines in this chapter are mentioned as one of the enemies of the Lord's people who represent the flesh. What are some of the things they did in the book of 1 Samuel to disrupt the Lord's people?

3. The flesh is one of the believer's greatest enemies. An excellent pamphlet that presents God's way of dealing with the flesh as well as with the world and with the devil is found in The Christian's Three Enemies: God's Way of Victory Over Them by B. Anstey.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 24:24-26:6: God's Sure Promises

At last the two sons were born, Esau being the firstborn and Jacob the younger. Esau was a man of the field, and Isaac loved him because of his venison. Are we not like Isaac in this way quite often? We love people, not because of their faith, or devotedness to the Lord, but because of what they do for us. It reminds one of the Scripture, "A gift doth blind the eyes" (Deuteronomy 16:19). We need to have the single eye so that we can appreciate the kindness of others, without allowing it to blind our eyes to what we should see for the Lord's glory.

Jacob had his failures and God has faithfully told us about them. Let us remember that although God has recorded the failures of His people, He does it to warn us and does not excuse them. Even godly men can fail, and fail badly, when they are not watchful. Jacob was a schemer. He always had a plan of his own ready and could not wait God's time. Don't we often scheme like this too, making our own plans because we do not want to wait on the Lord? Such plans, when we leave the Lord out, will always bring sorrow, though at first they may seem to prosper. God had said that Esau, the older, should serve Jacob, the younger, but Jacob thought he had to do something to make God's promise sure. He made his own arrangements and bought Esau's birthright. Of course Esau should never have sold it, but two wrongs never make a right, and Jacob found this out later to his sorrow.

The Birthright

Let us look a little more carefully at Esau's act. He had a birthright. He was the firstborn, and he should not have sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. And you, too, dear reader, have a birthright. You have been born in a Christian land where we have an open Bible, and perhaps you have Christian parents too. Salvation is offered to you, and this is your birthright. Are you despising it? Are you saying as Esau, "Behold I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" Do not sell it; do not despise it. If you do, you will come to the time, as Esau did, when many tears will not bring it back, and you will realize that it is too late. Think of the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30) that will be yours forever if you reject Christ as your Saviour. You may get a few short moments of pleasure in this sinful world in return for selling it, but what is that in view of eternity?

There had been a famine in Abraham's day, and now there is another one to try Isaac. He started to go down into Egypt, but the Lord graciously intervened, hindering him from going all the way. How sweet were the words spoken by the Lord, "Sojourn in this land, and I will be

with thee, and will bless thee.” God had not forgotten His promises in spite of the famine. Whenever God asks His children to walk in a path of faith, He sustains them if they look to Him in dependence. It is always easier, however, to get away, than to get back, and sometimes God has to use unpleasant circumstances to bring us into the place where He would have us. We shall see this in Isaac’s experiences in Gerar.

1. How did Jacob try to make God’s promise sure?

2. Not valuing the rich treasures that God has prepared for us can be a real problem for us just like it was for Esau. What are some of the rich treasures that God has given to you? You can find a few of them in Hebrews 10.

3. We all benefit from meditating on God’s gifts to us. One excellent pamphlet on the subject is Seven Present Blessings Through the Death of Christ by H. H. Snell. It develops some of the rich blessings found in Hebrews 10 and other places in Scripture.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 25:11,19-23: Faith and Service

Let us stand, as Isaac did, by the well of “Him that liveth and seeth” and look out on life from there. It is of all importance that we have the right point of view when looking at things. Yes, we need God’s viewpoint, for He sees all that we do, hears all that we say, and even knows our very thoughts. He is recording our lives too, and “Only what’s done for Christ will last.” How about those big plans to make a name for ourselves or to find a resting-place in this world where He was the rejected One? How will they appear in the presence of Him who was once crucified and cast out by sinful men?

Serving the Lord

Life is so short, and the Lord’s coming is near — very near. We have only a little time to live for Him who died for us and rose again. The fields are “white already to harvest” (John 4:35), and the laborers are few. Many who should have been serving the Lord are either taken up with the cares of this world, or discouraged, for if there ever was a time when Satan was making an assault on the children of God, it is today. He has his traps laid, with the camouflaging so well arranged that things look very attractive, and there are few who choose the safe, though unpopular, path of obedience to God and His Word.

As you read this, you probably have your health and energy, and how nice it would be if you used them for the Lord, owning His claims over your life. There are open doors on every hand. There are people who have never heard the Gospel even in our own lands. There are old people, too, who would appreciate a visit, with a few kindly words and a smile from someone who is young, and this may give an opportunity to speak to them about our precious Saviour and His love. There are young people who are looking for encouragement, who long to find some other young person who wants to follow the Lord, and though we cannot do anything in our own strength, the One “who liveth and seeth” is able not only to show us the right path but will enable us to walk in it. May the Lord grant blessing on our “meditations by the well” (Genesis 24:62-63) and give us the grace, not only to be hearers of the Word, but doers also.

God Knows

Isaac asked the Lord for a son to be the heir of all He had promised him, and the Lord heard his prayer. Rebekah had twins, and it is sweet to notice the simplicity of her faith in it all. When there was something she could not understand, she “went to inquire of the Lord.” What a privilege we have as children of God to be able to look to Him in all our difficulties and problems. God’s answer, too, was one which only faith could lay hold of. How could it be known beforehand that “the elder shall serve the younger”? This is one of the great problems of unbelief but one of the simple things to faith. God knows — yes, He knows everything, past, present, and future, for they are all the same to Him who can “call those things that be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). There are several instances in the Bible where God has told us the names of men, and what they would do, hundreds of years before they were born. It will quiet our fears, and settle our problems as believers, if we always keep these two words in our hearts and memories: God knows.

1. What did Rebekah do when she could not understand something?

2. How can you serve the Lord today? This chapter suggests many quiet, unobtrusive ways to take God’s Word, comfort and love to others. What might be the way that He wants you to serve?

3. One simple, unseen and easily neglected service to the Lord’s people is prayer. You would be refreshed and stirred up by reading the brief and simple booklet Epaphras: The Service of Prayer by C. H. Mackintosh.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 24:61-24:18: Watching and Waiting

Rebekah started out at once on the long journey across the desert. She was on her way to meet Isaac, and the whole journey is passed over by the inspired writer in a few words: she “followed the man.” She did not have to make the journey in her own strength, for the camels carried her, and the “man” guided her safely through the dangers of the wilderness. The way to Glory will not seem so long and hard to those of us who belong to the Lord, if we, too, follow the guidance of the Spirit of God through the Word.

Waiting in Faith to Meet the Lord

Isaac came out to meet her in the field, and so the Lord will soon come for us, for we who are saved are the bride of Christ. Rebekah was watching as well as waiting to see Isaac and was glad to alight from her camel and go to meet him. Are we, dear young believers, watching and waiting for the Lord to come at any moment? Are we willing to leave our “camels” and all that connects us with this wilderness world and go out to meet Him?

How wonderfully the story ends! Isaac himself escorted her to his mother's tent, and she became his wife, and he loved her. Surely this speaks to us of the love of Christ, and when He takes us to His home above, we shall still be, as we are now, the objects of His love forever. Nothing can separate us from that love which passes knowledge. Can the reader of this little paper say, "The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20)?

Abraham gave all he had to Isaac, the promised heir, and we know, too, that God the Father has put all into His Son's hands, who will in the coming day share it with His bride (the church) as Isaac did with Rebekah his wife.

At last Abraham's long life ended, and he too was buried in the field he had purchased. He had been a stranger and a pilgrim, looking for the fulfillment of God's promise — the possession of Canaan. However he "received not the promise" (Hebrews 11:9) as to earthly blessing, but he died in faith and will have something better — a heavenly portion. Like Sarah he was buried in Canaan, because he knew that God was the God of resurrection, and that He had not forgotten His promises.

Living in the Sense of God's Presence

Isaac was a man of faith too, and God blessed him. He dwelt by the well Lahairoi. This was the place where he had met Rebekah when she came back with Eliezer, and it means "the well of Him that liveth and seeth." How good for us as young people when we learn to live in the sense of God's presence, and in the enjoyment of our relationship to Christ as His espoused bride.

To all outward appearances Ishmael did not seem to have anything like the troubles that Isaac did, but God passes over his life, as well as the lives of his family in a very few words. Ishmael, as far as we know, was not a man of faith, and his life was of little importance in the eyes of God. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]" (Hebrews 11:6). Dear young reader, how does your life appear before God? Have you a real living faith in the Lord Jesus, so that you can say, "I know whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1:12)?

1. What did Rebekah do when she saw Isaac come out to meet her in the field?

2. Living with a quiet sense of the Lord's providing for us and not allowing sin in our lives are at the heart of communion. What are some of the indications that Abraham had enjoyed that communion in his life?

3. You would no doubt enjoy the simple booklet Communion With God: What Is It? by C. H. Mackintosh.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 24:28-60: A Decision to Make

Rebekah then went home and told everything to her mother. It is a fine thing when children learn to tell things to their parents. "Honor thy father and mother" (Ephesians 6:2) is still God's order and cannot be disobeyed without bringing down His hand in discipline.

Eliezer awaited the invitation from Rebekah's brother Laban, and what a hearty invitation it was, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord." Every kindness was shown to him, his servants, and his camels, and very soon a nice meal was ready for them. Eliezer would not eat, however, until he had told his errand. Everything was open and aboveboard, and there was no false impression left. He did not say one thing and mean another. It is nice to see this straightforwardness of character in the children of God, and it surely is honoring to the Lord. Nor was Eliezer out to see what he could get from his friends. Too many young people want to get as good a time as they can and do not deliver their message fairly as Eliezer did. God delights in uprightness, and so the whole matter was clearly stated in the presence of Rebekah's parents. How much happier the parents felt about it, although the decision was left entirely to her, and they acknowledged that it was of the Lord.

The Lord Acknowledged

Again Eliezer bowed his head and worshipped. He acknowledged the Lord in all his ways, and surely He directed him. He gave jewels of gold and silver and raiment to Rebekah, as well as precious gifts to her brother and mother.

At last, when everything had been talked over, he relaxed and enjoyed himself, eating of the meal which had been prepared for him and his servants.

Having considered this touching story in its practical application to us as young Christians, let us now look at its primary meaning. Eliezer, as we remarked in a previous chapter, speaks to us of the Spirit of God who is now in this world, pleading with sinners to leave this "far country" and come to Christ. There is a place in His bright home above for all who will come.

The Decision Made

After Rebekah had heard all about Isaac's wealth and what would be hers as his bride, she was asked to make her decision. Her father and mother might have hindered her, but she must decide for herself. Eliezer wanted her to go at once, and the question is put plainly to her, "Wilt thou go with this man?" Dear reader, the question is being put plainly to you too, if you are still unsaved, "Will you accept Christ as your Saviour and start out for a Better Land?" Just as Eliezer, Abraham's servant, was going to accompany Rebekah all the way back to Canaan if she was willing to go, so the Spirit of God will abide with the believer forever, taking him all the way to glory. Rebekah's answer was definite. She said, "I will go." Have you made your decision? If not, why not do so now? Do not delay — not even a few days, as Rebekah's mother and brother suggested she should, but decide for Christ NOW.

1. What did Eliezer need to do before he could eat with Rebekah's family?

2. Rebekah had never met Isaac, so her decision was a huge step of faith. Who, if either of them, had the easier trip of faith to Israel, Rebekah or Ruth?

3. Faith is essential for the life of every believer. A simple pamphlet that will really help you in your life of faith is Faith by H. P. Barker. It contains many simple illustrations to help you grasp the difference between faith and feelings.

We can still learn a great deal from this remarkable story. The courteous manner in which Eliezer requested a drink is very instructive: “Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.” He was not bold and demanding, for if we expect to find a friend with real Christian characteristics, we must act in a thoughtful and considerate way ourselves. So here, Eliezer soon found a ready willingness on the part of Rebekah; and he knew that she was the one the Lord had chosen for Isaac. She drew water for all his camels, and this was not a small task, for Eliezer had ten camels!

Well might he wonder, and yet our God is a God of wonders! One “who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). It wasn’t long until Rebekah was rewarded for her kindness, and surely Eliezer was rewarded for waiting on the Lord. His promise is ever the same, “Them that honor Me I will honor” (1 Samuel 2:30), but we cannot expect to be honored, if we do not honor the Lord first. “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:6).

Confessing His Name

Before Eliezer did one thing more, he asked Rebekah a most important question. He said, “whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee.” Too many young Christians leave this important question until later on, and sometimes, sad to say, they never ask it. They want “just a little friendship” and can go on for a long time having a so-called good time without saying, “Whose daughter art thou?” or in other words, “Are you a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus?” It was foremost, however, in the mind of Eliezer, and Rebekah readily replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel. Yes, she gladly admitted that she was one of Eliezer’s master’s brethren. It wasn’t a half-hearted, indefinite confession, like so many in our day, causing us to wonder if they are really the Lord’s. One who really belongs to the Lord can confess His Name clearly and definitely and is glad to do so.

Piety at Home

Another lovely thing about Rebekah is the way she speaks of the hospitality of her parents’ home, though not inviting Eliezer herself. She was learning these things in the happy circle of her own family. Yes, there was room for the man and his camels, and soon her brother came out and invited him in. Everything was so beautifully proper in its place, and this was more evidence that it was not just an empty thing with Rebekah. Any boy or girl can be nice when they are out, but it is the home life that tells, and Eliezer was going to see her actions at home. “Let them learn first to show piety (godliness) at home” (1 Timothy 5:4), is a good word for us all.

Eliezer had learned to take everything from the Lord, and to thank Him for His blessings, and he bowed his head right at the well and worshipped. Then he began to talk about the Lord too. There is not much danger of getting into bad company when we talk about the Lord, and it is a fine thing to make this the subject of our conversation. Eliezer was making decisions in his heart, and Rebekah in hers, but there was ample evidence on both sides of an ardent desire to do the will of the Lord.

1. How did Eliezer know that Rebekah was the one the Lord had chosen for Isaac?

2. A bold confession of Christ early in our Christian life can keep us from many troubles later on. What happened to Peter when he tried to enter the high priest’s palace the night before the Lord was crucified?

3. It sometimes requires a lot of courage to stand up for the Lord when others are opposed to Him. You can find many examples of courageous believers who were strengthened not to deny Him in Miller’s Church History by A. Miller.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 24:11-16: The Lord's Guidance

We have followed the pathway of Abraham’s servant to the side of the well, and as we remarked before, he was then in the right place to choose a bride for Isaac. Water in the Scriptures often speaks to us of God’s Word (see Ephesians 5:26) and so we can see in this a picture of one who is walking in obedience. While patiently waiting on the Lord, Eliezer prayed and asked His guidance that the decisions which he was about to make might be the right ones. How many serious mistakes would be avoided if we always made our decisions in this way.

Led of the Lord

The Lord surely guided Eliezer most remarkably, and the story abounds with little details which are full of instruction for us as young people. Rebekah was thoughtful and kind. It could be said of her as of the one described in Proverbs 31, “In her tongue is the law of kindness.” Children of God who want to please the Lord are not thoughtless of the needs of others, nor are they selfish and always thinking of themselves first, nor are they lazy. Eliezer knew all this, and so he asked the Lord that He would lead him to the one who, when asked for a drink, would say, “Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also.” He knew, too, that only the Lord could guide him aright, and he was content to wait on Him.

Eliezer wasn’t long in getting an answer to his prayer. But perhaps some of our readers are saying that they do not get such a ready answer to their prayers. Let us draw your attention to something very beautiful in Eliezer’s attitude before he ever came to the well at all. He had said to Abraham, “Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son unto the land from whence thou camest?” and Abraham had replied “Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.” If he could not get a bride for Isaac in the path of obedience, he was to come back through the wilderness alone, and this he was content to do. What lovely faith! God has been pleased to record it for our encouragement. He knows the difficulties of the way and takes notice of all we do for Him — even when we suffer rather than disobey. Abraham’s word was definite, “Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.” How can a Christian expect the blessing of the Lord, if he or she goes back into the world, out of which God has saved us, to get a life companion. It is a dangerous course to pursue.

The Lord Looketh on the Heart

Rebekah then came to the well, and she was “very fair to look upon,” but this was not the deciding factor in Eliezer’s choice. There were much deeper considerations than these, and we do well to bear in mind the Scripture which says, “Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised” (Proverbs 31:30). Eliezer knew that “the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7), and he awaited His guidance.

Before closing our little chapter we would like to remark that the primary meaning of this story is that the Spirit of God, like Eliezer, has come down into this world to get a bride for Christ. All who are truly saved form part of that bride, and if the one who reads these lines is unsaved, our desire is that you might listen to the pleadings of the Spirit of God with your soul and accept Christ as your Saviour NOW.

1. What was Eliezer to do if he could not get a bride for Isaac in the path of obedience?

2. Selfishness is a huge problem for many. Why was it so impressive that Rebekah would draw water not only for the man but for his camels as well? If you were diligent, you might be able to calculate a reasonable guess of how many buckets of water one would have to pull up out of the well to give water to those camels. Compare that to the amount of work it would require to set the table or open the door for someone.

3. The book Another Hive of Busy Bees by B. Soderholm contains an excellent and simple story that teaches the lesson to be unselfish. You might find it helpful in developing your thoughts on the subject of selfless service to others.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 24:1-11: Gathering a Bride for Christ

In figure, Isaac had passed through death on the altar on Mount Moriah and had come forth again in resurrection (see Hebrews 11:19). Then his father Abraham sent Eliezer, his servant, into a far country to get a bride for him. Eliezer speaks to us of the Holy Spirit of God, who has come down since Christ has gone back as the One who has died and risen again. The Holy Spirit is now gathering out of the world a bride for Christ, bringing them from a “far country” to the Father’s house above.

Perhaps some of our young readers wonder what we mean by the “bride of Christ,” and we want everyone to understand our “Bible talks.” It is just this way! When anyone takes the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, the Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Trinity, comes to indwell them (see Ephesians 1:13; 1 Corinthians 6:19.) They then become part of the true church of God, the body of Christ, and when the Lord Jesus comes for His own as the Bridegroom (Matthew 25:6), they will be caught up to meet Him. The marriage will then take place in Heaven (Revelation 19:7), just as Isaac’s marriage took place when Rebekah reached Canaan.

A Bride for Isaac

Now to go on with this very interesting story. Abraham made his servant promise to go all the way to Mesopotamia where he was to choose the bride and bring her back. Eliezer started out on his long journey, taking everything that was necessary to persuade the bride-to-be of the wealth and glory of Isaac, so that she would be willing to come. Thus when the Spirit of God begins to work in a sinner’s heart, He brings before the soul all that Christ has done, and the future glory with Christ for the one who believes. He meets him, too, at the “well,” using the water of the Word for the sinner’s blessing. This was the way the Lord did with the woman at Sychar’s well in John 4, telling her of the gift of God and giving her far more than He had asked from her. He had requested a drink of water from Jacob’s well, but He gave her a drink of the “living water.” Dear young reader, the Spirit of God longs to give you a drink of the “living water” too. When you accept the Lord Jesus as your own Saviour, you will find the truth of the words, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Guided by the Word

The Word of God has many interesting lessons for us, and just as we learn many things from pictures, so God uses “word pictures” in the Bible to teach us. Let us look at this story before us in a very practical way. These chapters are written for young people, and we all like to have friends. Our problem is this, who are the right friends to choose, and perhaps harder still, where will we find them? Since Eliezer was trying to find a bride for Isaac (who in our “picture” would speak of Christ), his experiences will surely be helpful to those of us who want to choose a friend or friends to please Him too.

Eliezer knew the right place to find the one for Isaac. It was by the well of water, in the very place where Abraham had told him to go. Abraham would speak to us of God our Father whose Word should ever be our guide. We can never expect to find the right one in the path of disobedience, nor by the “broken cisterns” of this poor world.

1. What does Eliezer speak to us of?

2. Having friends that encourage us to follow the Lord Jesus can have a huge, positive impact on our Christian testimony. What are the characteristics of a good friend? You can find many of them by searching for the word “friend” in the book of Proverbs. You’ll find a lot of useful instruction there.

3. You’ll find a more extensive discussion of this chapter, along with some excellent gospel messages, in the short book The Call of the Bride by W. T. P. Wolston.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 22:7-24: The Lord Will Provide

While Abraham and Isaac were traveling on together, Isaac asked a question. He saw that his father had the fire and the knife, and he himself was carrying the wood, but he asked, “Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering?” How this question must have touched Abraham’s heart, but

his faith was unshaken as his beautiful reply shows us. He said, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” Isaac accepted the answer in perfect confidence, and they both went on quietly together. Surely this would remind us of the garden of Gethsemane. There we hear God’s Son saying, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). If that cup of judgment had passed from Him, we would have all been lost eternally. He only could bear it for us, and so in obedience to His Father’s will, He took that cup, which we had filled with our sins, and drank it to the last dark drop. He bore all the judgment for those who believe, and there is none left for us because He said, “It is finished.” If the reader of these lines is unsaved, why not bow before Him now and thank Him for the work of redemption He has finished for you?

A Way of Escape

At last Abraham and Isaac came to the place of which God had told them. Abraham built the altar, set the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son upon it. Then with unfaltering faith he took the knife to slay his son, but just at that moment God called to him from heaven saying, “Abraham, Abraham ... 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.” God was faithful and made a way of escape for Abraham in the temptation (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). The knife did not fall on Isaac, for a substitute was provided. Yes, there was a ram near which Abraham took and offered up in the stead of his son. Every type falls short of the perfection of the work of Christ, for there was no substitute to take His place. He was the Substitute Himself, and the sword did fall upon Him. He was the Lamb of God’s own providing, and He could not escape as Isaac did, or we would be lost eternally. No one else could be a sacrifice for sin but He, and so He died that we might live.

God’s Provision and Promise

Abraham then called the place “Jehovah-Jireh,” which means, “The Lord will provide.” It was in this very place (Mount Moriah) that Solomon’s temple was built. This shows us that the ground of all worship is always and only founded upon the finished work of Christ, which Abraham’s sacrifice typified. The only right way of coming into the presence of God is given us in Hebrews 10:19, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

God appeared to Abraham the second time making the promise that, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” This word, “thy seed,” refers to Christ through whom all nations will receive blessing. In the Old Testament God dealt particularly with Israel, but since the work of redemption is completed, the gospel can be preached to “whosoever will.” After this Abraham returned to Beersheba (the well of the oath). Now we, too, can “Draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isaiah 12:3), for all our blessings come to us through Christ.

1. How did God make a way of escape for Abraham?

2. The Lord Jesus being made a Substitute for us is one of the fabulous truths of Scripture. How does the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14 present that truth beautifully?

3. The pamphlet The Divine Ground of Gathering by J. Brereton makes an interesting application of this same story from Genesis 22. You would no doubt find it simple and profitable reading.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 22:1-6: Obedience and Faith Tested

We have now come to one of the most beautiful stories in the Old Testament. God had fulfilled His promise and given Abraham a son whom he loved very dearly. Undoubtedly he did all he could to make Isaac happy, and I am sure they were always together, while Abraham told his son all about the true God and His promises of blessing. Little Isaac learned to trust in God as his father did, with a real living faith.

Faith in Testing

One day a great test came to Abraham. God asked him to do something very, very hard. He told him to take Isaac and go into a land a long way off and build an altar there on which he was to offer up his only son for a burnt offering. How could he do such a thing, and why did God ask him to do it? Abraham did not stop to consider such questions. He knew that God would never ask him to do anything which was not for his good, because God loved and cared for him.

Therefore, the next morning he and Isaac arose very early and started out. Abraham did not delay because he knew that the longer he waited the harder it would become. Don’t we often miss the path because we delay? We try to persuade ourselves that there is an easier way than just simple obedience, but the longer we wait the more confused things become. Let us learn to “obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) and to obey at once.

Going Forth in Faith

Abraham was not left to choose the mountain he wished. His offering was to be made on the one which God told him of, and no other mountain would do. Moreover he had to walk for three days before God showed him where it was. He could not see it from his tent door; he had to “go forth” in faith in order to find it. God only gives us light for one step at a time, and when we take that step, He gives us more. Abraham did not do the work of the Lord negligently (Jeremiah 48:10, margin). He had everything prepared; the ass saddled, and the fire and wood were ready when the journey was started. Sometimes Christians forget, or neglect, to take their Bibles and hymn books with them when they go to the meeting place. We should always put forth every effort to do the Lord’s work to the very best of our ability.

When Abraham saw the place afar off, he left the two servants with the ass, while he went on with his son. This last part of the journey was the most difficult as Abraham and Isaac “went both of them together.” What a beautiful picture of God the Father, and Christ the Son, going on to the cross. How the Father’s heart found infinite joy in every footstep of that Blessed One as He went on to Calvary, there to finish the work He had given Him to do.

1. Why didn’t Abraham question God’s instruction to offer his only son for a burnt offering?

2. Faith always obeys God’s clear instructions in His Word instead of arguing that they don’t make sense. What were the arguments against David’s fighting with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17? How do David’s words show how faith was active in his response?

3. The short book Abraham and the Life of Faith by C. E. Lunden would likely be a real encouragement to you in meditating on what it takes to live the life of faith.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 1:26-31: The Creation of Man

And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (verse 26). Our verse begins with two wonderful words, “Let us.” This means that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, purposed together for the creation of man. He was to be created in the image of God, because he was to represent God on the earth as the head of all creation, of all the animals, the birds, the fishes, and the little insects. Then, too, Adam was to be morally after the likeness of God. Of course he did not yet have the knowledge of good and evil. He was innocent.

What a wonderful scene it was, with everything fresh from the hand of God and all very good.

Life Comes From God

Man’s life, or breath, came directly from God, for “God ... breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). When cows, horses, and all other animals die, that is the end of them, and some people will tell you that when you die, that is the end of you, just the same as animals, but God says, “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). It is better to believe God than man, isn’t it? The Bible is God’s word and it tells us the truth. If you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, there is no judgment for you, for the Lord Jesus bore your judgment on the cross, so that when you die you will be “absent from the body ... present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Your body will be put in the ground and go back to dust again, but your spirit will go to be with the Lord, and be happy there with Him until He comes and gives the shout in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16). Then your body will come up out of the ground and will be changed into a body just like Christ’s, and you will be with Him forever.

If the one who reads this is unsaved, then, when you die, your body will go into the ground too, but your spirit will go to the prison-house of the lost (1 Peter 3:19), to wait there in torment until the resurrection of the wicked dead, which will be about a thousand years after the first resurrection (Revelation 20:5). The first resurrection takes place when the Lord Jesus comes for His own. Yes, your body will come up out of the ground, even if it has gone back to dust again, and you will stand before God to be cast into the lake of fire to suffer there forever (Revelation 20:10). God warns us of these things because He loves us. Don’t listen to those who tell you that there is no hell for God says there is. But God has provided a way of escape, and if you will come to the Lord Jesus just as you are, He will save you. Come now.

1. Why was man created in the image of God?

2. Are there other creatures that the Bible tells us were created directly by the breath of God being breathed into them? What does this tell you about God’s relationship to mankind?

3. If you really want to dive deeper into the essential subject of life and death you might enjoy listening to the audio CD Preliminary Considerations on the Nature of Life and Death by D. Rule.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 1:14-25: Light and Life

God made great lights, the sun, moon, and stars, on the fourth day. Men have made some wonderful searchlights which will shine for about a hundred miles, and we have many bright lights in our homes, but the sun which God has put in the sky is about 93 million miles away, and yet it lights up the whole world, and makes our electric lights look like nothing. Not only does the sun give light, but its rays are so warm in the summer time, that we are glad to get into the shade to keep cool. We could not live without the sun, for nothing would grow without sunshine.

The moon hasn’t any light of its own, but during the night it reflects like a mirror the light from the sun to that part of the world which is in darkness. It reminds us of how we who are saved should reflect the light of Christ to this world that is dark because of sin. Sometimes the earth comes between, and makes an eclipse of the moon. So we have to be careful that the sinful things of this world don’t come between us and the Lord, and keep us from shining for Him.

The Fifth and Sixth Days of Creation

On the fifth day God made birds to fly in the sky and fish to swim in the sea. Isn’t it wonderful to think of so many different kinds of great and small fishes that swim in the water. The great whales down to the tiny sardines were all created by the word of God. Some of them swim in very deep water, others in shallow brooks. Some are in salt water, others in fresh, but God has given to each one a body suited to where He has placed them. A fish could not live on the dry land, nor could a man live under the water. Then there are all the beautiful birds with their lovely feathers and pretty colors, right down to the sparrow that is so common. Some of them have lovely songs, and others do not sing at all. Often the birds that are not so beautiful to look at have the sweetest song. Not only did God create these wonderful fishes and birds but He sustains them, that is, He keeps them living. “By Him (Christ) all things consist” (Colossians 1:17). When we look at all these wonderful creatures, we know that God takes His pleasure in them too.

The sixth day was the last day of creation. Each day was a day of twenty four hours, because God has told us, “The evening and the morning were the sixth day” (verse 31), and each day was the same. On the sixth day God made all kinds of cattle, animals, and creeping things. There were lions, bears, and all other kinds of animals, but they were not wild until after sin came into the world. What a wonderful scene it was, fresh from the hand of God, without a groan or such a thing as fear or death. All that was needed to make creation complete was man,

who was to be placed over it all as its head.

1. How should we who are saved be like the moon?

2. Consider what will happen to the animals after the Lord Jesus begins to openly reign as king over everyone on the earth. Isaiah 11:5-9 describes what will happen. How does this compare with what was happening in the garden of Eden during the time described in Genesis 1?

3. If you love learning about the amazing creatures that God has created, you will probably enjoy The Wonders of God's Creation by S. R. Gill.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 1:4-13: Creation

Then God divided (separated) the light from the darkness, making the day and the night. Each night is followed by another day, but when time comes to an end, as it will someday, there will be eternal day for the saved ones, and eternal night for the lost. Remember the separation will be eternal. Will it be eternal day with Jesus in Heaven, or eternal night in Hell for you? If you have accepted the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you can gladly answer that you know you will be with Him in Heaven. If not, it is just as certain that you will be in that awful place of judgment.

On the second day God made a firmament which He called Heaven, and it separated the water in the clouds above from the water on earth. There are three heavens mentioned in the Bible. The first heaven is where the clouds are, and where the birds fly. The sun, moon, and stars are in the second heaven. The third heaven is where God dwells (2 Corinthians 12:2).

The Dry Land

God made the dry land appear on the third day. Up to this time all the earth was under water, but when the dry land appeared, God set the bounds of the seas (or oceans, Proverbs 8:29). How easily God could make the waters cover the earth again, as He did at the time of the flood. They are kept in their place by His mighty power, and He has promised they will never cover the earth again. Think of the majesty and greatness of God, and then of how wonderful it is that He thinks about us, who are so small and helpless, and loved us enough to send His Son to die for us.

God also made the grass, the vegetables, the trees, and all kinds of plant life on the third day. Each one has its seed, or seeds, in it, from which to grow new plants. Men can make wonderful things, but they cannot make life. They cannot make a single seed, or give life to the tiniest insect. Life is entirely in the hands of God, and this is one secret men will never be able to find out. When God sent the plague of lice in Egypt, even the heathen magicians had to say, "This is the finger of God" (Exodus 8:19).

We always reap what we sow, too, for a pumpkin seed will always grow pumpkins, and turnip seeds will always grow turnips. This can be applied to our lives, too (Galatians 6:7). If we are disobedient to our parents, we may have children someday who will be disobedient to us. There is also a brighter side to it, for if we live to please the Lord, we will reap a good harvest in having His blessing on our lives. Which kind of seed are you sowing?

1. What are the three heavens mentioned in the Bible?

2. How did king David both "reap" for his disobedience and for his obedience?

3. If you are meditating on the subject of reaping and sowing, you may enjoy related thoughts in the booklet God's Grace and God's Government by P. Wilson.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 1:1-4: In the Beginning

The Bible is not like any other book. All other books are written by men, and some of them are true, but many others are not. However, the Bible is God's Word, and although God used men to write it, they did not write just what they wanted to, but wrote exactly what God told them. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Men have written many books about how this world began, but they only suppose things. These are called theories. What God has told us in the Bible is true, and we must, therefore, believe it. As we grow older, we find there are many things we cannot understand. God has given us the answer to some of these questions in His word, and we can thank Him for it. Other things God has not told us because it is not good for us to know. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Creation of Heaven and Earth

The first verse tells us how the Heaven and the Earth began. "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth." God is the only One who can create anything, that is, make things out of nothing, and Ephesians 3:9 tells us that God created all things by the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, in John 1:3, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made."

Both the Heaven and the Earth were created perfect, for God always makes things perfect, until sin spoils them. Now in verse 2 we read, "The earth was without form and void." It had been spoiled. Perhaps many, many thousands of years had rolled by since God created it, and somehow it had been spoiled. God has not told us how, for it is one of His secrets. What God has told us in the rest of the chapter is how in six days He made everything necessary and beautiful, and then created Adam to live on the earth and enjoy it.

Light

On the first day, “God said, Let there be light and there was light” (verse 3). “God is Light,” but the sad thing is that since sin has come into the world, “Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). When the light from God shines into our hearts, it first shows us how sinful we are in His presence. Then God also tells us the way we can be made the children of Light, being made perfectly suitable for His presence by “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son (which) cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Have you taken the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour? If so, you are one of the “children of light.”

1. How is the Bible different from all other books?

2. Why is light a good way to describe God’s holy character?

3. A readable commentary that presents many of the figures of Christ found in Genesis is Genesis: The Book of Beginnings by G. C. Willis.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 19:23-20:18: Our Eyes on the Lord

Although Lot’s wife got out of Sodom, her heart was still there. The angels had said, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain,” but she looked back and became a pillar of salt. She became a constant reminder of the fact that there must be real faith if there is to be real salvation. Your father and mother, dear children, may bring you up in separation from the world, but unless you have to do with God yourself, and accept the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour, you, too, may “look back” and be lost forever.

The Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah

God rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. The sun had risen brightly that morning, and many of the people there had probably made their plans for the day, but they were never carried out. God’s judgment brought a sad and unexpected end to everything. And are we not living in similar days when people make their plans and leave God out? They want to forget about coming judgment, and when they cannot forget it, they deny it. May we plead with you, dear reader, not to follow the crowd that is going down the broad road? God has told us that the broad road leads to hell, and He is calling you to “Escape for thy life” because He wants to save you for eternal glory. He will give you the assurance of His own Word that there is no condemnation (or judgment) for you, if you will accept His beloved Son as your own Saviour. You will have eternal life, and a home above, if you will just come to Him.

The last we hear of poor Lot is very sad and disgraceful to say the least. As you read these lines, perhaps you still have life before you if the Lord does not come. May He help us all to take warning from Lot’s course, for if we go after the world, who can tell how our lives will end. None of us would like them to end as Lot’s did, would we?

Again Abraham went down toward the south country, and in that place he got his eyes off the Lord. He had the fear of man before him, and that always brings a snare. He should have learned that lesson long ago in the land of Egypt, but how often we have to learn the same lessons over and over again.

Uprightness and Honesty

There is another thing here too. Abraham told the truth to hide the truth. It is so easy to do that and a very deceitful kind of lie indeed. Abraham said of his wife, “she is my sister,” and while this was true, it was deception, for she was really his wife. Let us learn to be open and above board in all things, for the secrets are all going to come out someday, and God wants uprightness. “All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).

God graciously intervened on Abraham’s behalf, and spared him the full results of his sin, but he let Abimelech rebuke him. It is a bad thing when the world has to rebuke us. Be careful, dear boys and girls, that you don’t do anything so that your friends have to say, “I didn’t think a Christian would do that.” It is very displeasing to the Lord. God told Abimelech that Abraham was a prophet and that he would pray for him. How gracious this was, for it shows that in spite of our failure, God is patient and never disowns His children, though He does not belittle our sin. Salvation is always “by grace” and grace alone!

1. Why did Lot’s wife become a pillar of salt?

2. What does “tell the truth to hide the truth” mean? How is it possible to do the same thing? Why is this a form of dishonesty?

3. If you’ve never read The Bible Promise Book edited by K. Abraham, you might find that you enjoy the verses collected together on the subject of honesty.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 19:4-22: Reaping What Is Sown

Poor Lot tried in vain to make his visitors welcome. He was utterly powerless to change things in his home, much as he would have liked to have done so. The men of Sodom knew that Lot was not accustomed to that kind of company, and they came to see who the men were. How different from the peacefulness of Abraham’s tent! Nor did the Sodomites usually find Lot’s door shut against them. It was usually open to them, and they did not like being kept out. Lot was willing to pay an awful price to have peace in his home. Yes, he was willing to give his daughters to be companions of those wicked men, but the angels intervened and hindered, causing blindness to fall upon those about the door. It is a sad, sad story which should be a warning to all our young readers. It is but a fresh proof of the truth of God’s Word which says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6:7). Lot was reaping just what he had sown when he pitched his tent toward Sodom.

A Good Testimony Before the World

The angels then delivered their message to Lot and his family. They gave Lot the privilege of inviting his sons, his sons-in-law, and his daughters to find a place of safety outside of Sodom. He then went to their homes to tell them, but he seemed as one that mocked. There was no power in his words, because he didn't live it before them. You will find, dear boys and girls, that if you want others to listen when you speak to them about Christ, you will have to act like a Christian before them. Your friends won't take your message seriously unless you do. No, Lot's sons-in-law and his married daughters would not leave Sodom. They perished in it, and it was Lot who had brought them there — how solemn!

Even Lot himself, with his wife, and two daughters who were still at home, were slow to get out of the doomed city. The angels had to pull them out! They evidently did not like to think of losing all they had gathered together there, but leave it they must. Everything was going to be destroyed, just as all the boasted treasures and vanities of this present world are going to be burned up very soon. Let us take warning from this and not try to build our hopes here. We will have to leave it all someday, and only what has been done according to the will of God will abide, and nothing else. If the one who reads these lines is unsaved, you will not only lose all you have gathered together in this world, but you will lose your own soul too. Oh, will you not come to the Saviour this very moment, accepting His work on Calvary as that which can put away all your sins? COME NOW.

Obedience

Lot requested that he might go to Zoar for refuge. He still wanted to live in a "city" instead of in a tent like Abraham, and so his desire was granted, but surely sorrow followed him there too. If we are insistent in going after the things of the world, even in a small way (for Zoar was a little city), we may get our desire, but how can the Lord bless such decisions?

Our salvation depends only upon simple faith in the precious blood of Christ, but our happiness depends on obedience. So here, the angels told Lot they could not do anything until he was safely out of Sodom, but his choice of Zoar brought him plenty of sorrow.

1. Why were Lot's words of safety without power to his family?

2. The Bible uses the expression "world" in several different ways. This chapter refers to one of them. John 3:16 refers to a second way of talking about the world. Acts 17:24 gives a third way of referring to the world. Can you distinguish between each of these ways of talking about the world?

3. A more difficult-to-read but highly valuable booklet for your study of the "world" in Scripture is What Is the World and What Is Its End? by J. N. Darby.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 18:20-19:3: Intercession and Separation

Sodom and Gomorrah were exceedingly wicked cities, where men and women lived careless lives without any thought of God. They little realized that judgment was soon going to fall upon them. And are there not many people today just like them? How many go on in their sins from day to day as if they would never have to answer to God at all. What an awful day it will be for them when God judges this world in righteousness. Then only those who have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ will escape the judgment.

Abraham As Intercessor

Abraham became an intercessor, pleading for Sodom, where Lot lived. Although he knew that the Judge of all the earth would do right, he also knew that God delighted in blessing. Would He destroy the city if there were fifty righteous people in it? No, God said He would not destroy it if there were only fifty righteous people in that great city. Abraham then asked God if He would spare it if there were but forty-five. But there were not even forty-five! Abraham continued asking, reducing the number each time. What if there were only forty — or thirty — or twenty? What if there were only ten? No, not even ten people could be found who feared God and were accounted righteous in that mighty city! Abraham then stopped pleading, and the three men went on toward Sodom. Dear young reader, if you are saved and are praying for others, keep on praying. Perhaps God would have spared those cities if Abraham had continued asking, but Abraham's faith apparently weakened, and he stopped asking. What an encouragement to pray we find in Colossians 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Yes, dear Christian "continue."

Only two out of the three men went as far as Sodom. The Lord was not among them when they reached there.

Strangers and Pilgrims in the World

Just two angels came to the gate and whom should they find sitting there but Lot. He had advanced to quite a high position in Sodom, even though his righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds. How sad it is to see one of God's children trying to get to the top in this world which has crucified God's beloved Son. God said to Jeremiah, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not" (Jeremiah 45:5). We should be like Abraham who was a stranger and a pilgrim in the land of promise. The believer's place of exaltation is in heaven, and we shall reign with Christ when He reigns in righteousness in a soon-coming day.

Lot invited the angels to his home in Sodom, and tried to make them welcome, but his efforts were rather unsuccessful. When they had arrived at Abraham's tent door, he had been able to make them feel welcome, but Lot's house in Sodom had the stamp of the world upon it. Lot's wife, and his daughters did not join in the welcome, nor did they help in the preparation of the "feast." They were not accustomed to such visitors, nor were they at all "at home" in their presence. Poor Lot tried to do all he could for them, for at heart he was a righteous man, though most unhappy in his position. What a sad picture of a worldly Christian home! In such a home there is never any happy unity, but a kind of uncomfortable feeling when someone calls to talk about Christ. If you, dear reader, want to have a happy Christian home, begin now by choosing Christian friends who want to follow the Lord.

1. Who did the two angels find sitting in the gate of Sodom?

2. God gives many encouragements to pray in the Scriptures. One of the dramatic answers to prayer occurs in Exodus 14. How did the Lord answer prayer on that occasion.

3. You can find many of the important fundamentals of prayer given in the pamphlet Prayer: An Introduction by N. Simon.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 18:5-19: The Ways and Counsels of God

What a lovely meal Abraham provided for the three men who came to his tent door! Perhaps you never thought God takes knowledge of what we serve for our guests, but He does! Abraham and Sarah both had their part, as well as one of Abraham's young men, in preparing the cakes, the meat which was so "tender and good," along with the butter and milk too! Wouldn't you like to have helped in preparing that lovely meal for those three men, who were really the Lord and two angels? What a privilege it was! But I hear some people saying, "The Lord never came to my house, nor angels either!" Well, they haven't come in a way that you could see them — that's true — but we have a nice verse for you. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (Matthew 25:40). When you help mother prepare the dinner, you can do it as if you were really doing it for the Lord! That would make you want to do it well, would it not?

Sarah's Unbelief

The Lord again promised that Sarah was going to have a son. When Sarah heard this, she laughed. She did not think it was possible. The Lord heard her and asked why she had laughed. Sarah then denied it and said she had not laughed. Abram had laughed with pleasure in the seventeenth verse of the previous chapter, but Sarah laughed because of unbelief. The Lord knows the very reason why we do things!

At last the three men set out for Sodom, and Abraham accompanied them. It is just another little reminder of the kind of hospitality Abraham showed his guests.

Many years ago a dear servant of God had been holding meetings in a certain place. There was a young man in the home who always managed to stay out of sight. He did not want to be spoken to about his soul, though it was evident he was under deep exercise. On the night of the last meeting he went quietly to his room and accepted Christ as his Saviour. Can you guess what was the first result seen in his life? Well, it was just this. Early the next morning, the preacher had to take the train for home, and who should offer to carry his bags to the station but this very young man who had been avoiding him! Yes, he now wanted to be in his company, and like Abraham he helped "to bring him on his way."

God's Purposes in His Word

Would God hide His purposes from Abraham? No! That is why God has given us His Word. He has told us about all His counsels, though unsaved men cannot understand them. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Don't expect your unsaved friends to understand the Bible. It is not until we have accepted the Lord Jesus as our Saviour that we have the Holy Spirit of God indwelling us to teach us its meaning.

Abraham was a strict father, though he was a loving one too (Genesis 22:2). God said of him, "He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." He did not allow his children to do as they liked. He made them obey because he loved them, and he knew that true happiness was the result of obedience.

1. Why did Sarah laugh when she heard the Lord's promise that she would have a son?

2. Serving others is a huge privilege for every believer. Often that service comes without thanks or encouragement from other people. How did Ruth serve in a simple way without trying to attract attention to herself? What were some of the results?

3. You would no doubt enjoy and benefit from reading the pamphlet Christian Service by W. J. Prost.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 17:15-18:4: Obedience and Kindness

God told Abraham and Sarah that He would give them a son to be the promised heir. This seemed like an impossibility in their old age, but "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). He asked God that Ishmael might live before Him, but this was not a prayer of faith. Sometimes we, too, ask God for things which are not for our good, and if we persist, He may let us have them to our own sorrow. So it was here, for Ishmael did live, and his descendants were the continual enemies of the people of God. When making requests in prayer, we should always say "if it be Thy will," because God knows what is best for us.

In spite of Abraham's failure, God was faithful. He fulfilled His promise in His own time and gave them a son.

At the end of our chapter we see beautiful obedience on the part of Abraham, for although we all fail in some things, God takes knowledge of what is done for Him. Abraham and all his household were circumcised "the selfsame day" in which God spoke to him. Too often we are very slow in doing what the Lord has asked us to do. If there is something, dear young Christian, which you know the Lord wants you to do, ask Him for strength to do it now. Delay is always dangerous and a hindrance to blessing.

Courtesy Shown to Strangers

The eighteenth chapter opens with a very beautiful scene. It was a very hot day, and Abraham was sitting in his tent door when three men came near.

He ran to meet them and bowed himself. This was real courtesy, and God has put it in His Word to show us that it was pleasing to Him. We are told to "be courteous" (1 Peter 3:8), and we should always act kindly to others. It is never right to be rude and thoughtless.

We are living in days when many often forget those little acts of kindness which God wants to see in His children. Never mind whether others are courteous to you; you can be courteous to them just to please the Lord Jesus who died for you. So many children say they are saved, but it often saddens our hearts to hear them answering back and being bold to their parents, their teachers at school, and to others much older than themselves. When we have really accepted the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we should be careful to show it out in our lives day by day. God wants reality, not just lip profession.

These three men were strangers to Abraham. He did not recognize at first that one was the Lord, and the other two were angels. However he welcomed them and showed them true hospitality. He invited them to rest under the trees and got water for them to wash their hot feet. People did not travel in fine cars in those days and had to walk long distances in the scorching sun. How they must have appreciated Abraham's thoughtfulness and the welcome he gave them. God takes more notice of the little things we do for Him, than we are inclined to think. When someone comes to your home, do you try to welcome them, and do little acts of kindness for them? The Lord will fully reward you if you do such things "as unto the Lord," even if they forget to thank you. "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

1. What did Abraham do when the three men came near?

2. We often think of hospitality as inviting our friends over to have a good time doing things we both enjoy. Can you contrast this with the kind of hospitality that Abraham showed?

3. The Institution of Marriage by P. Wilson has an excellent chapter entitled Bethany that gives some helpful instruction about hospitality.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 17:1-14: Walking Perfectly Before God

God did not give Abram up even though he had failed. If He gave us up when we fail, where would any of us be? Even though He has to let us feel the results of our mistakes, yet His love never changes.

God said to Abram, "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Abram had not been walking before God when he became the father of Ishmael. It is so easy for any of us to walk before others, trying to please them instead of putting the Lord first. God would have us to be conscious of being in His presence at all times.

In the Presence of God

Some years ago there was a young man who really loved the Lord Jesus, and tried to please Him at his work. The other men did not like his quiet, living testimony day by day and tried to get him to do things which would spoil it. One day a number of them made a circle around him, and then when he could not get away, they told one of their bad stories. Then they all started to laugh, but he did not join with them in their sinful laughter. He knew the Scripture which says, "Fools make a mock at sin," and so he remained quiet and sober. At last one of the men said, "Laugh, John." His simple reply was, "Men, I live in the presence of God." This made them all ashamed, and they soon left him. They did not want to be in the presence of God. If you are unsaved, dear reader, you, too, are afraid of meeting God, but if you will come to Him now, just as you are, He will save you, and His perfect love will cast out all fear.

When God spoke, Abram fell on his face before Him. There is always a reverence which is appropriate when we are in the presence of God. That is why we should close our eyes, and if possible, kneel down when we talk to God in prayer. It is very displeasing to the Lord to talk or whisper during prayer at Sunday School, in meetings, or at any time when others are praying.

The True Meaning of Ordinances

In order to confirm His covenant, God told Abram, now called Abraham, that every man child was to be circumcised. Circumcision was the sign of death, and it was to keep fresh in the mind of Abraham as well as his children after him, that the only ground of blessing was, and still is, through death. All this pointed on to the death of Christ. The children of Israel soon began to give great importance to circumcision as an ordinance but lost its true meaning. Then God had to say that their "circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Romans 2:25). It became only an empty form to them.

Professing Christendom has done much the same today with the two Christian ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper. God's Word makes it very clear that these ordinances cannot save anyone's soul. They cannot give life to one who is "dead in trespasses and sins." Only faith in Christ and His finished work can do that. Nor are they necessary to salvation, for the thief on the cross went to be with the Lord, even though he was never baptized. Many dear Christians, too, have never partaken of the Lord's supper. These ordinances are, however, precious Christian privileges, when their true meaning is laid hold of by faith from God's blessed Word. If you are not saved, dear young reader, remember that nothing but living faith in Christ can save you.

1. How did God confirm His covenant with Abraham?

2. What does the act of circumcision represent in a spiritual sense? What does "uncircumcised in the heart" mean in Jeremiah 9:26?

3. If you're looking to learn a little about circumcision, then the article in the Concise Bible Dictionary by G. Morrish is a good place to start. You can read it at bibletruthlibrary.org by doing a library search for Article Number 80698.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 15:13-21: The Future of the People of God

Only God can foretell the future with assurance! Here we find Him telling Abram what was going to happen to his nation hundreds of years later. It is foretold with marvelous accuracy, and yet in a very few words. Everything is known to God, and how foolish it is to try to hide

anything from Him. Every movement in our little lives only accomplishes His purposes, and if we belong to the Lord, He makes all things work together for our good.

Notice the words, “The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” God never judges until evil comes to its height. He is a patient and longsuffering God, delighting in mercy, but He cannot allow sin to go on forever. This world is rapidly getting worse. Boys and girls are doing things they would never have thought about in years gone by. They do not want restraint from their parents, nor their teachers, nor anyone else. They have no fear of God before their eyes. They want their own way — little realizing that they are just hurrying on the awful day of judgment which is soon to come upon this dark scene. After the Lord has come, and taken His own to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18), man’s evil will “reach unto heaven” (Revelation 18:5). Then “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation” (Daniel 12:1). Dear young reader, will you not listen to the warning, and “Flee from the wrath to come” (Matthew 3:7)? You may go on for months, and even years, in your sins, having your good time (so-called), but remember judgment is coming. The only way of escape is through Christ. “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7). This may be your last opportunity to be saved. Will you come to Him now?

The Smoking Furnace and Burning Lamp

After God had told Abram about what was to come upon his nation in the future, Abram saw two things; a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp. The smoking furnace speaks of affliction and trial, while the burning lamp tells us of the light of God’s Word shining on our path, bringing encouragement to our hearts even in the trials. Abram’s nation (Israel) had many times of affliction, but God was ever faithful and brought deliverance. But who endured “the furnace” like the Lord Jesus Himself, when He was forsaken of God on the cross? And now the “burning lamp” of His Word brings the message of blessing to us. Even in all your difficulties, dear boys and girls, let the precious light of God’s Word shine upon your path, and give you guidance and cheer.

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

God then made a covenant to give the land of Canaan, which is now known as the land of Israel, to Abram’s seed. It is their land, and it will be the center of earthly glory and blessing, when the kingdom of Christ is set up on earth. This time is drawing near, and God is beginning to put a desire into the hearts of the Jews to return to their land. They are, however, going back in unbelief, and will not be blessed until they repent of their great sin in crucifying their Messiah. We should not despise the Jews, for they are still the people of God. They are a scattered and suffering people today because of their rejection of Christ.

1. What do the smoking furnace and burning lamp represent?

2. The affliction and trial for the Lord’s earthly people Israel in a future day will be incredibly intense. That period of time will be known as the tribulation.

3. You’d probably find Future Events by R. A. Huebner to require quite a bit of effort to study. However it contains an important chapter on The Great Tribulation and would undoubtedly give you a much deeper understanding of that coming time of trial for God’s people.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 15:1-12: Our Shield and Reward

After Abram had made such a grand decision — refusing all the king of Sodom had to offer — then the Lord appeared to him with these beautiful words, “Fear not, Abram: I am thy Shield and thy exceeding great Reward.”

How often we find these sweet words in the Scriptures, “Fear not.” If you are unsaved, dear young reader, this message is not for you. God does not say “Fear not” to you, but rather warns you of coming judgment. Will you take the Lord Jesus as your own personal Saviour? Then His perfect love will cast out all your fears (1 John 4:18)? At Calvary all God’s righteous judgment against sin has been fully met, in order that poor sinners such as we might be brought into blessing. Abram’s faith looked forward to the cross — we can look back to it as a finished work.

The Lord Our Reward

God also said, “I am thy Shield,” and if God undertakes our cause, and promises to protect us, all is well. If we know that God is for us, what a wondrous Shield we have! And He is our Reward too! Sodom’s king offered rewards to Abram, and Belshazzar offered rewards to Daniel; the world will offer many rewards to you, too, dear boys and girls, if you go after them. May we be like Abram and Daniel, refusing them because the Lord Himself is our Reward. Then we can say like Paul, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). Could we have any better reward than this? An “exceeding great Reward” indeed!

Abram longed for a son, to be the heir of all God had promised him, and so he asked the Lord about it. What a beautiful reply he received from Him: “Look now toward heaven.” Oh, that in all our difficulties and problems, we, too, would learn to look toward heaven! Yes, we can ask the Lord’s help at any time, for He knows our needs.

God’s Covenant to Abram

God then promised Abram that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and Abram believed it. Yes, that is faith! It means that we believe what God says, even though we cannot understand. If we could understand all of God’s ways, it would not require faith.

In making this covenant or promise of blessing, it had to be confirmed by means of death. The only way in which a righteous God can bless sinful man, is through the death of a Substitute, and so the death of these animals pointed on to the one perfect Sacrifice — the Lord Jesus who died for us on Calvary. The fowls of the air which would have come down on the carcasses, tell us of Satan (“the prince of the power of the air”), who has always tried to hinder the purposes of God. In the energy of faith, Abram drove them away.

“A deep sleep ... and an horror of great darkness” fell upon him while the sun was going down. Abram was made to feel the solemnity of having to do with God. We are living in careless days, when we see very little real exercise before God. People think much too casually about

sin, and its horribleness to a holy God. If you have never felt your sins, our prayer is that you may feel them now, until you cry out “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

1. What was the Lord’s reply to Abram’s question about a son?

2. We are told to fear God, but then we are repeatedly told to “fear not”. What is the difference between the two kinds of “fearing”?

3. The pamphlet Fear Not by H. H. Snell would no doubt be a real encouragement to any believer.

Glendale Conference: 1993, Lessons from Abraham's Life

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

Like to look this afternoon a little bit at the life of Abram, and particularly one part, if you'll turn to the 14th chapter of Genesis. We'll begin at the eighth verse. And there went out the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admiral, and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Belah, the same as Zoar, and they joined battle with them. In the Vale of Siddim which cater Leomer, King of Elam and with title. King of Nations, an Amraphel, king of Shinar and Arioch, king of Elazar 4 kings with five. And the veil of Sinem was full of slime pits. And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, that all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew, For he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Escal, and brother of Einar. And these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that, his brother was taken. If he armed his trained servants born in his own house, 318 and pursued after them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto hovah, which is on the left side of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Caterly Omer and of the kings that were with him at the Valley of Shiva, which is the Kingsdale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram, have the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. The king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a threat even to a shoe latch, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should us say, I have made Abram rich. Save only that which the. Young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with Mechel and Mamre, let them take their portion. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? And the steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, unborn in my house is mine heir. May all the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad. Said, Look thou toward heaven, and tell the number, tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed on the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land, to inherit it. And he said. Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? And he said unto him, Take me, and heifer of three years old, and as she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And He took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another. But the birds divided He not. When the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Adam, and lo, in horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in the land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them 400 years. And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge. And afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace, and thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

But in the 4th generation they shall come hit her again, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, when the sun went down, and it was dark. Behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed, have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, the Kenizzites and the Cadmanites, The Hittites and the Perizzites and the Raphaems and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Girgashites and the Jebusites. Well, as I said, I'd like to speak a little bit about the life of Abram. It's a very wonderful thing that God doesn't just set truth before us, but he gives us living example, people of like passions with ourselves. And so that we not only know that we are saved through the work of the Lord Jesus, that we're called to that blessed home above and all these things. And what is our present position as members of the body of Christ? Blessed with all spiritual blessings. In him, all these things we can learn as doctrine, but I think it's very precious in the Old Testament. God gives us in type and shadow living people, people who had feelings like we have, the Bible says men of like passions with ourselves. And so as we look upon these people, we can perhaps in some little measure enter into their feelings. And that's why I said I'd like to say a little bit about Abram. I'd like to go back at the very beginning. Where the the Lord called him out from Ur of the Chaldees. According to what is known today, there was apparently a quite progressive civilization back there, and maybe Abraham and his wife had many comforts back there. And then one day he got a call from the Lord, and he called him, Get out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will tell thee of. Well, what a decision this was. And perhaps many of us look back to the time when. We were just going on our own way, living in the comforts of this world and trying to make the best of life here in this world. And the Lord in his grace met us and he called us, just as God called Abram, to a better land, a land flowing with milk and honey. We heard that call. And by the grace of God, if we are truly his, we responded. We responded. It may have been just like with Abraham. A break with loved ones. A break. With many associations that we had before, it wasn't easy. It wasn't easy for Abraham. It wasn't easy, easy for Sarah, his wife, either. And perhaps we can picture what happened when this call came and Abram said to his wife, God has called us to leave this country. And she said, where are we going? Well, he hasn't told us. He tells us that he will show us. Well, are we going to have some of the comforts we have here? Here, I don't know, I'm just the the Lord has called us and I believe I can count upon him. Well, I often think that was wonderful faith on the part of them both. We picture them talking about things, then closing up everything there in Urtha Chaldees and starting out. Well, there was a couple of people came along with them. Abram's father came along. He would accompany them part way. And sometimes we find that maybe. The old friends will come part way. Maybe. Whereas with Abraham's father, I questioned very much whether it

was a real work in his heart. As far as we know, he never had living faith. Another one, a nephew, and his name was Lot, and he came along. He was a person of faith, but he was one. Perhaps I could use the expression he never walked in his own faith. And dear young people, and perhaps some of us who are older too, the Lord tests us whether we're walking in the faith of some other Christian or in our own faith and confidence in God. I suppose all of us have gone through this.

Some measure Am I just going on with the Christians and coming to the meeting because I have relatives who come, or am I really coming for the Lord? This was a test in Lot's life. However, he did go along and as I say, God tells us in the New Testament that he was a real person of faith, but he went along. But it seemed that he just moved with Abram and without having a personal exercise. Perhaps that is the position of someone here, but the test is going to come in your life sooner or later. Things are not always going to go that way and you're going to be tested whether. You're doing what you're doing, whether you're coming to the meeting. Came in my life. Maybe you'll come in your life too. Am I just coming because my father and mother are there? Or have I really had a word from the Lord? Have I listened to His word? Does it really mean something to me? Am I resting upon His word? Well, they came, as we know, and Abram hesitated before he entered the land. Perhaps he weighed the hardships a little bit. And his father's persuasion. And he stopped. He didn't enter the land at once. In fact, there was quite a little period of time there when he waited until his father died. God shows us that these times come. And perhaps there is a time come in your life when God had to speak to you. Maybe some relative you loved but might have been a hindrance might have been holding you back. And the Lord removed that hindrance. And then it tells us that Abraham. Remembered what the Lord had said. He had said, Come out from thy father, and from thy mother, and from thy kindred unto a land that I will show thee. So after his father died, we learn by experience, sometimes bitter experience, brethren, but it's a good thing if we learn. It's a good thing if we profit by that which the Lord brings into our lives because. There's always a purpose that God has. All things work together for good, for good. To them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. Well, he came into the land and really nice to see how he came in. And Lot and his wife came. A lot I should say wasn't married. Then Lot came along too and they came to that place between Bethel and Hai. And he pitched his tent and build his altar. What a happy. Timeless was in the life of Abram. Things were now. Developing, shall I say, He was putting the Lord 1St and the Lord was blessing him and perhaps he thought as we all sometimes think, oh, everything's going to go smoothly from now on. The problems are all in the past. They're not going to have problems now because I've done what the Lord wanted me to do. I confess I didn't that the past, but now I've come. And I'm there with Bethel, the House of God in the West. That to me is like the end of the journey and be on the east, that which he left behind, just like the sun rises in the east and sets in the West, that which he left behind. Was just hai a heap of rubbish? He saw that and he pitched his tent there and built his altar. But there was a famine in the land after a little while and you say, well, everything went well and I went on happily, but but. But there are some things that happened. I came to the meetings and they weren't just as fresh and happy as they used to be. I wasn't able to enjoy the things like I used to. And what was I going to do? Was I going to keep on coming just because I believed the Lord was there and that's where the Lord had shown me that He wanted me to be? Or was I going to try? An escapism, a way of getting away from the situation. Well, Abraham did just that. Perhaps all of us have done just that. We tried to escape problem. I saw a sign once and it said the best way out of trouble is through it. I think there's a lot of truth in that too, because we don't have to go through it alone. We have the Lord with us who has said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Sometimes we try to escape trouble. We run into a. Situation although it may not seem that way at first, it may seem if the way of escape that we have chosen seems to turn out quite well. At first we had ourselves in the back and say, well, I think I made a good decision, I don't have all these problems. So he went down into Egypt and the land of Egypt speaks of the world in its glory itself. Sufficiency they didn't.

On rain, it was an irrigation system that they used and so they didn't have to be dependent on the Lord. We like that sometimes, but we don't have to daily depend on the Lord. And so he went down there, he became rich, but something sad happened. He didn't deny any relationship to his wife, but he denied his true relationship. He said she's my sister, but she was his wife. And you know, you can say I'm a child of God. I just ask you, are you meeting as a member of the body of Christ? Well, that's, that's the position that may cost you something to walk in that path as a member of the body of Christ. There may be trials, there may be famines in that path, but it's God's path that he's marked out for us in his precious word. You say, well, I'm a Christian. I wouldn't deny him. No, you never would. No true Christian would ever deny the Lord from his heart, but we wouldn't perhaps. We'll make compromises. And he went down there well, things went well for a while. He became rich, and he had silver and gold and cattle. His nephew, whom he took down with him, because remember this. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Your life, my life, has an effect upon others. Either for good or otherwise. Where Bible says we're made a spectacle to the world and to man and angels, people are looking on. If you want to get in the limelight, accept the Lord. You'll be noticed. People will watch you, your friends will watch you, and they may be somewhat influenced by you too. And so here he was, he brought lot down there, and at last the Lord allowed things to come out that, shall I say, forced him to leave. The land of Egypt and come back to where he had left. If there's any of us that have been turned aside and the Lord allows some circumstance to come about, take it from Him. Maybe He's showing you that you have made a false depth. Maybe He's showing you that you have gone away. That wasn't for him. All you say was it was a famine. Don't blame me for leaving because it was a famine. Well. When there was a famine in the time of Isaac, God said sojourn in the land and I will bless thee. Well, that looked kind of unusual to stay there when there was a famine, but the Bible says Isaac sold that here and reaped A hundredfold. When he stayed in the land where God had told him to stay, he reaped A hundredfold. The best harvest he ever had, I expect. And you know, there's nothing like staying and asking the Lord to keep us in the path that he's marked out in his precious word. Well, Abram came back, came back to the very place of the tent and the. Walter came back to where he was at the first. But there's something that I believe the Scripture warns us. We have to reap what we saw. We have to reap what we sow. And the reaping is not always pleasant. But the Lord is with us even in the reaping. The Lord's with us even in the reaping. So he did do some reaping, you know. He he had brought lot down into Egypt now. Life comes back with them because God wasn't walking in his own faith. But now there was a strife between Abram's cattle and the cattlemen of Abram's cattle men and the cattlemen of Lot. And Abram's a very gracious man. And he says to Lot, I'll give you first choice, Lot. I'll give you first choice. Isn't that nice to see that gracious spirit? He could have said, well, after all, I'm the uncle and he's the nephew and, and I'm going to have first choice. But he left it. God blessed him for it. You know, when we put the Lord first, we can leave situations that look difficult. Oh, you say somebody just took took it and got ahead of me. Oh, never mind. Abram was blessed in the end. Abram.

Had a better portion, but he had given lot a taste of Egypt. And so when he went down to Sodom, he did it because it looked like the well watered plains of Egypt. You know, we affect others. You may come back yourself, but you may not be able to bring back the ones you led astray. There is a government of God in our lives, brethren, and we have to watch. Says my brethren, be not many masters, knowing that ye shall receive the greater condemnation. Bible speaks of when a standard bearer falls. It's a solemn thing. Well, we find then that lad had come back into the land. God was blessing him, tells us in the last verse of the last two verses of the 13th chapter. Arise, walk through the land, and

the length of it, and the breadth of it, and I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Hebron. Hebron, that means communion, and built there an altar unto the Lord. Well, isn't this nice? He's walking in communion with the Lord. He's dwelling there. But what about poor lot? He looked for the well watered plains, proudly thought he was making a much wiser choice than Abram. And said, well, I took the best. Well, he did. He took what seemed like it. But it wasn't all for good, was it? Here he was down in Sodom. Now he had first pitched his tent toward Sodom. Now he's down living in Sodom, and there's a big battle takes place and poor Lot and his wife and all he had are carried away. And I think there's something beautiful about Abram. He could have said, well, it serves him right. He, he was. Trying to get the best for himself and now he's seeing the foolishness of the step he made sometimes. Sometimes were pretty complacent when others get into difficulty rather than but isn't this nice that he said, well, I'll help him, I'll help him. And it tells us that he armed the both of his household and went out to deliver lot. And I like that little word. I brought it my brother, my brother. He could have said he's just my nephew, but he said he's my brother. He's my brother and so he armed his. He armed his servants and they went out, and the Lord gave him a great victory, and he brought back lot. Bible never says lot said thank you. The the Bible never tell us that lot gained anything by the experience. It seemed like you just went back to live in Sodom. He says no use. He won't say thank you and he won't appreciate it. But God valued that love. God valued that love, even though it didn't seemingly accomplish anything, at least showed the heart that Abraham had for his brother. And so Lot went back and lived in Sodom. But where we began, we see what took place. And then now there's a test coming in Abram's personal life again. There was a test in the beginning, whether he'd come all the way to the land of Canaan or be influenced by his father. And we know he stopped. Until his father died, whether he's going to be influenced by this problem that he has with his nephew Lot, his brother. Well, we see that there is a steadiness about Abram. And he never went down into Sodom to get him, but he went down to help him. That is, he never went down to. He left him until the Lord spoke. And sometimes we just have to leave matters in the Lord's. Hands, but we can still keep love in our hearts fresh and burning, you know. And so tells us then here that. In this chapter where we began, there was this battle that took place and he goes down. But now when he returns from the victory, we see there's two people that meet Abram. There's the king of Sodom, and there's Melchizedek the priest. Of the Most High God, a picture to us, as we know from Hebrews, of the Lord Jesus. And so tells us that after the victory, who's the first person that met him? It was the king of Sodom. The world always tries to make its bid, but I think it's so lovely here, it tells us.

In this 17th chapter verse of the 14th chapter. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Cater Leomer and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Shiva, which is the King's Dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God. Does that remind us, brethren, of the precious privilege we had this morning? This is the first mention of the bread and the wine. Because the Lord Jesus won a great victory at Calvary, we often sing His be the victor's name who fought the fight alone. Triumphant Saints no honor claim His conquest was their own. And so He comes out, and we had that precious privilege. May we always value it, brethren. He's asked us to remember Him until He comes. And Abram was met by this Melchizedek, and he was. The bread and the wine, and then he blessed Abram. It says here that. The 19th verse And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. Makes me think of that verse that we read in Corinthians. All things are yours. Whether? Paul or C fast. How are the world? All are yours and ye are Christ, and Christ is God's. You might not have much in this world, but we belong to Christ. We're heirs and joint heirs with Christ. What a lovely thing it is to go through this world, even if we didn't have great possessions, to null that we belong to the one who's heir of all things. If we got it now, it might bring us a lot of trouble, but we're going to. Have it and share it in a time when there will be no more trouble and we'll enjoy it in company with the precious Savior who died for us. But now. It says in the 21St verse, well I just mentioned perhaps at the end, the 20th verse, and he gave him tithes of all. Now under the law they were told to give it. But here it just seems that Abraham's heart was touched, and shall I say, he gave the Lord his portion, because the Lord has his portion in the final day when he brings Israel into blessing, it says. Yet a tense shall remain in it. That is, the Lord will have his portion. Are we giving it to him now? Brethren? Are we giving the Lord his portion? Not just of money, but everything now belongs to him? And then Abram the king of Sodom, comes, and he says. Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. No, the enemy doesn't mind if we get along in this world, if we get well off in this world. He doesn't mind that. But he said you can. You can have the the goods, but give me the persons. Oh, it's you and I that he wants. He wants us, says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable or intelligent service. Have you? And I said, Lord, here I am, I'm not my own anymore. You are not your own. You're bought with a price. And so the King of Sodom wanted the persons. That's what he wants. Thanks. He's got something for you. But the Lord paid a great price that he might have you. And if you're truly the Lord, you belong to Him. And the 22nd verse. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should have say I have made Abram rich. Well, I have no doubt that that conflict that he had going forth and taking his servants probably did cost him something, but he wasn't going to take anything from the King of Sodom. The Lord will reward you better than any person of the world can reward. You, if you do something for him, How? How lovely this is. Oh, you say, but that was so small a threat. A shoe lights it. Well, I often think of that. You know, you say a thread just might be on your clothes, but a thread is pretty important. What does it do? All her clothes are held together by threads.

And, you know, it's just that little thread woven through that pulls everything together. And, you know, sometimes it's those little links that we keep with the world that lead us out of communion. You may say that was just a thread. Yeah, but a few links of that thread. And first thing you can't pull away. A thread and then a shoe lights yet walking her feet. Blessed is he that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, or standeth in the way of sinners, or setteth in the seat of the scornful. He wouldn't take those things. Oh, he says just a little thing. Oh, brother, it's not very much. He wouldn't forbid me some pleasure. No, that's real pleasures. But be careful. And I need to be careful too. Those little things that. That tie us up to the world and where we can walk with them. Enoch walked with God. Enoch walked with God. So see, he refused that. And he said, I don't want what they have. But I think this is nice too, in the last verse, save only that which the young man have, Eton and the portion of the man which went with me, Einer, Hiscall and Mamre, let them take their portion. I think that's very nice. Don't jurisdict for other people. Don't say. The Lord can draw out their hearts and so he said, I just have to take my. For the Lord, others will have to make their own choice. Sometimes people are forced into something that they're not spiritually up to. But I'll tell you this, if the Lord has won your heart, He wants your all. He claims everything and He has a right to it. We're not our own. We sell out. Actually, when we're saved, we say, well, that used to be my car, that used to be my house. Now it belongs to the Lord and I just want to use it for Him. What a difference. So. I can't speak for you, brother, and you can't speak for me, but are we presenting our all to the Lord? We can each ask our own heart this question. Well then, it tells us in this 15th chapter. After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Isn't that beautiful? I think of that little hymn that says in season, thus sustaining word thou gives to our hearts to know as he saw a lot walk away and go back into Sodom, and not even saying thank you as far as we know

from scripture. And seeing only opportunity. Of getting something from the King of Sodom and turning it down. He might have just felt a little bit flat. He might have just felt a little flat. Isn't it lovely? These times do come, brethren. The Bible doesn't only teach us doctrine. It gives us real people who had feelings like we have. And the Lord appeared to him and said, don't be afraid, Abram. I am thy shield protection. I am thy exceeding great reward. Oh, what a lovely word of encouragement. There may be someone here. You said I try to take a stand for the Lord, but nobody appreciated and things have gone difficult for me. The Lord wants to come and stand by you and say I'm nice, Sheila, I'll protect you and I'm exceeding great reward. He didn't say I'll give you an exceeding great reward. I am thy shield. I am I exceeding great reward. But Abram had something that still. Bothered him, shall I say. And Abram said unto the Lord God, What wilt thou give me? Seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus, if I can interpret like this, he said. But there's one thing I want, Lord. And thou hast not given me that one thing I want. Maybe there's somebody here feels like that. I have tried to follow the Lord, but He knows there's something I've wanted, something I've prayed about. And the Lord has withheld that. I know he's my exceeding great reward. I know He means everything to me. But Clyde, does he hold back that thing that I really want so much? Oh, isn't this something? I'm so glad the Bible talks in this way because he just portrays our own. Hearts and the way we feel, because the Lord knows the innermost feelings of our hearts and perhaps we've all had feelings like this at times. And he said, the steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus. He just said, I, I don't see anything very bright ahead.

And the fourth verse. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir. Lo, he, and but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven. Yeah, sometimes we just have to do that. When things down here don't seem to work out, we have to look toward heaven. And the Lord tells him, of course Israel are an earthly people and so the promises are earthly, but. The blessing, even for Israel comes from above, the one who is up there and in control of everything. He's the one who gives them their blessing as He'll give us our heavenly blessing. And so, you know, I encourage anyone who feels discouraged here. Maybe you come to these meetings and things haven't worked out the way you had hoped, and you really came because you really wanted to sit under God's word and enjoy these things. The things haven't worked out. Let me leave that little expression. Look now toward heaven. Look now toward heaven. And then he points them on to a future that was far, far ahead. As we'll see toward the end of the chapter. It was a long way ahead. And so you say I want it now. Well, if we don't get these things now always. But oh, brethren. What is laid up before us, sure that when we get to heaven. Will say, oh, if I only live more for this Savior, it'd be worth it all for what he has done for me and the future that he has before me that I was saying to the young people the other night, it's just as if when Adam sinned, God said, well, you've spoiled this earth and I'm going to have to drive you out of the Garden of Eden. But he says, I want to invite you to a home. That you can't spoil and I'll pay the price. So you can be there. What a Savior. We have a wonderful, But brethren, it is a walk of faith. It is a walk of faith. And Abram's life speaks to me because our faith does get pretty low. It's less than a grain of mustard seed. The Lord said there wouldn't be any mountains in the way. It's because we have less than a grain of mustard seed. But let's not think about the amount of our faith, but the person in whom our faith is. Who is this person? He's the possessor of having an earth. He's the Lord of all. He's your Savior. He died for you. He loved you enough to leave heaven's glory to make you his own. And so the Lord tells him, and it says in the sixth verse, he believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness. What simple faith this is. And that's the only righteousness we have. It's the only righteousness. It's the righteousness which is of faith. We haven't earned it. We couldn't provide it ourselves. It's all through what Christ has done. The work that he has done, Christ himself. Is our righteousness. We are made the righteousness of God in Him. And the seventh verse. And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land, to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? Notice those two questions. The second verse, What wilt thou give me? And the eighth verse, whereby shall I know? Whereby shall I know? I suppose those two questions, What wilt thou give me, and whereby shall I know? Because. My father used to have a little expression sometimes for unbelieving believers. We know we're saved and we know heaven is our home. We'd all say yes, I know that to follow Christ is the best path. But our lives often show that there's quite a lot of doubts in the way we act. And so this was the way it was with Abram, and now the Lord shows him on what all this is founded. The ninth verse. And he said unto him, Take thee, and heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another. But the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

Well, I think simply it's showing us that the ground. All our blessing is through the sacrifice the Lord Jesus made. We know that these different animals that are mentioned here are different sacrifices because it took the whole 5 different sacrifices to bring before us the different views of the perfect work of Christ. The burnt offering brings before us what the work of Christ is to God. God, the sin offering, brings before us how it meets our need as sinners, the meat offering, how the Lord Jesus became man in order to accomplish that work. The peace offering. Is really the communion offering? And so it's by that by that work that we can have fellowship with God through the Lord Jesus. And then there was the trespass offering, which really speaks more particularly of things we knowingly do that are wrong. There are things against what God has brought before us. And so there are all these various views. I just like to say a little bit because I used to hear the older brethren say that we were worshipped. Burnt offering character and for a long time I was very puzzled just what they meant. But I'd just like to give you a little illustration. Perhaps some have heard me use it before. But I it helped me to understand the meaning of the burnt offering. Supposing I had a great debt and I'm not able to pay it. And a friend comes along and says to me, Gordon, give me the bills, I'll pay them for you. And he takes all the bills. He pays them. And he comes back and puts the receipt in my hand. My mind is at rest. My debt is all paid. And I say thank you. But I haven't learned how my creditor feels toward me. Does he like me or does he not? But let's suppose that's another way, supposing. My creditor himself sees this great debt on his books and he has a son whom he loves very much. And he says, I love that Gordon Hayhoe. Would you be willing to sell your house and raise the money so we can take this debt off our books? And his son says, yes, dad, I'd be glad to tell out what's in your heart. And so he sells his house, and I get the receipt and it says paid in full through the kindness of my son. I know my creditor, I know the debt is paid, certainly, but I know my creditor. Before I might have crossed the street, so I missed speaking to him, but today I crossed the street to speak to him. I say. I can't tell her how much I appreciate it and what a wonderful son you have. God delights to have us. Tell him what we think of his Son. By thee, O God, invited, we look unto the Son in whom thy soul delighted. Who all I will have done. Brethren, isn't it blessed that God gives us all those different sacrifices that show the different aspects? The heart of God told out all His glory vindicated. He didn't pass over our sins. His own Son paid the dead. Now communion is restored. The Lord Jesus became a man to accomplish that work. And as it was brought before us this morning, how much as man he suffered and felt an awful load of sin. That was the meat offering that was exposed to the fire and the sin offering and trespassing all that we were, our sins, our guilt. Everyone, all born by him. Well, I believe these are pictured to us and they're various appreciations, you know, in the burnt. Offering there was the Bullock, but there was the turtle doves and the young pigeons, and in the turtle doves and the young pigeons there was the crop and the feathers. And I've always been glad that when the man came and he saw somebody else bringing a bullet, he said, oh, I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed. But he brought his turtle. I

was in young pigeons, and the priest offered them, and he became a sweet savior. But what about the crop and the feathers and the others? They were wholly offered to the Lord. But what about the crop and the feathers? Of course, I hear a young person say, I'm afraid to thank the Lord. It might make some little. Mistake. And what I said, I might just say it the right way. What did the priest do? He put the crop and feathers down in the place of the ashes. But he didn't say to the man, I can't accept your offering. He offered up what was acceptable. We have the birds even here. Oh, how wonderful. What a wonderful savior we have. And so that's the ground Abram had said, Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

But it's not through any merit of our own brethren. It's not for what we have done as good Christians. It's all because of what He has done for us that all these blessings are secured. But we do have these experiences and they're all going to be remembered above. There's going to be a rehearsal. It all is going to come out. Isn't it worthwhile to live our life for Him? And though we have failed, to come back and be restored like Abram? And to know that in spite of everything and our questions and our doubts, that He's going to bring us safely through and Israel are yet going to inherit that land. And it says they shall inherit the land forever. The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, God's going to bring them in. They're trying to get the land over there, a little wee piece of it that they've got right now, and they're trying with all their might to maintain. In a little bit they have and to get help to support the minute, but when God gives it to them, they'll say we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth. I'm going to say the Lord did it all. We're going to say the same. He brought us there and it's only his power and his grace that will bring us through. Well, just to notice a little more in the end of the chapter. Speaks about. The IT speaks about when the sun was going down, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and low in horror of great darkness fell upon him. You know, sometimes we're maybe sitting here looking forward into the future and saying, well, Brother Gordon, it's nice to hear those things. They do encourage me, but. There's a there's a dark cloud ahead of me, and I can't see beyond it. And perhaps there's some of us just like that. After all, as the Lord had said to him, fell asleep in this horde of a great darkness fell upon him. But then it says the Lord told him their whole history for a long time ahead. Does the Lord know the future, brethren? Does he know? Yes, He can talk about tomorrow just as if it was yesterday. He knows the future. I don't. You don't. When we think of it, sometimes there might be a horror and great darkness, but He saw between those pieces the burning lamp and the fiery furnace. That's what is ahead for us in the world. Ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world, and we have His word as a lamp to our feet and the light to our path, I believe. The the two things that are brought before us. They were so true in Israel's history, all the times of sorrow and difficulty they went through, but the Lord never gave them up. It was in times when they seemed to fail the most that the Lord encouraged them the most, he said. He said, Lo, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. When was that? Just before, because of their sin, they were. When they went into captivity, into Babylon, had the Lord's love changed toward them? There was. Shall I say there was the smoking furnace and they really went through something. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego actually went into the furnace, but the burning lamp was there. The Lord stood by them in that. And I was saying, the other night you and I meet Chadrak, Meshic, and Abednego in the glory and say, tell me, what would you consider the most? Wonderful experience you had down here in planet Earth. What was you expecting to say? I would expect them to say. All of a sudden in the fiery furnace the Lord walked with us. We never experienced him so near and so real. Oh brethren, this is our history. We see it in Abraham. He's given to us. He hasn't just told us about the path of faith. He told us about a man that had like passions with ourselves. He told us about a man that wasn't perfect, a man that had his failures, who got waylaid along the path of faith at times, as we all do. But he still sought to go on. And the Lord undertook and blessed him. And you and I are going to meet Abram in heaven, and we're going to meet.

All the dear Saints in there in that glory above that the Lord is not going to leave us along the way. But what do we need? We need that confidence in him. And isn't this nice that in the in the 18th verse it says in the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying unto thy seed will I give this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites and the Kenizites and the. And the Hittites, the Perizzites and the Repiums, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girvashites, and the Jebusites, they never. As yet have possessed all their land. There were times when they got quite a bit and now they're shrunk down to a very little bit. But God says it's all going to be yours, it's all going to be yours. And every believer in this room was blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. And lo, we may have those experiences. And we do like Abram did, just remember what's the ground of our blessing? The sacrifice, what the Lord Jesus did on the cross of Calvary is the only ground. I'm not going to get there because I was better than some other Christian. I'm not going to get there because of anything I ever did or can do. I'm going to get there because of Calvary. But He's leading us, and when our wills by His grace are brought into submission to Him, there may be. The furnace along the way, but there will be the company in the furnace. There will be the lamp and the furnace, never one without the other. Sometimes we may allow the smoke to dim the lamp, but it's there, it's burning. And that's what Peter talks about in his epistle. He says that prophecy is like a a lamp that shines in a dark place until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts. So God is leading us. And the day is yet going to come for this world, but for us, brethren. Before anything set right here, we're going to see the morning Star and the Lord Jesus said I am the root in the offspring of David and the bright and morning Star. And then when he says, behold, I come quickly. John answered, Even so, come Lord Jesus. But may we be encouraged brethren, by these things God has recorded in his word. It says whatsoever things were written. Time were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. I'd just like to say another for the sake of those who are young. I'd just like to you to encourage you to read the Old Testament. Sometimes we think, oh, I don't understand these things, but if you have them in your heart. Then sometime something may be said in the meeting, in all that story that you just read as a matter of history. It all brightens up and you say, oh, I never saw that before. That's a lovely picture. But if you don't have it in your mind, how can the Spirit bring it to your remembrance? My father used to have. Little saying God doesn't work miracles to encourage laziness, and if we neglect the reading of God's Word, we're going to miss a great deal because in the Spirit, who is the remembrancer, can't bring precious things to our mind just at the time that we need them the most in season. The sustaining Word, thou gist our hearts to know.

Detroit Conference: 1963, Genesis 14:24; Genesis 15

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

For thine how gentle, yet how strong. Thy truth and grace, their strength, combine to draw our souls along. 197. Oh God, what God? 15. Pardon me. Chapter 14, Genesis chapter 14 and verse 17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Cater Leomer and of the kings that were with him at the Valley of Shiva, which is the Kings Dale. And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most High God,

possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. The king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich, save only that which the young men have eaten. And the portion of the man which went with me, Einar, Ashkel and Mamre, let them take their portion. After these things. The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless? And the steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in mine house, my house is mine heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir. But he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall I seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. Well, in this little portion that we have before us this afternoon, dear young people, I believe we have some very precious thoughts, a great victory that has been won, a challenge that comes to us and then to the problems that arise in our lives and how God comforts us and sustains us in them. And in the course of the of each believer, these things take place. We realize what the Lord has done for us. We are confronted with these challenges as to whether we are going to put the Lord Jesus first in our lives. And then sometimes there are problems confront us, problems as to why the Lord doesn't come in and deliver us in some situation, and how the Lord comforts us and sustains us and turns our eyes to himself as we had this morning. For the Lord Jesus is the only one who can really feel and satisfy the heart. Nothing that this world has to offer can really satisfy. God may in His goodness undertake for us in material ways and bless us, but He would have us to realize He would have us to enjoy more the fact that He himself alone can be the satisfying portion of the heart, David said in the Psalms. I have seen an end of all perfection. That thy commandment is exceeding broad, and we'll see. The end of everything that we have hoped for and everything that we have longed for as far as this world is concerned. But oh, how blessed it is that there is one who never fails, One who can be everything to you. He can be everything to the young as well as to the old. And it's a blessed thing, dear young people, when we learn this while we are young.

It's true that many learn it later on in life through the trials and sorrows. But it's a blessed thing when we learn it while we're still young and seek to go on that path that's pleasing to the Lord Jesus. Well, in the portion that we have before us, and I didn't read the beginning of this 14th chapter. But if you glanced over it, you'll see that there was a great conflict and took place there. And God granted a great victory. We know how that Lot had gone down to Sodom, and he had sought his, He had sought a home there, and then there had been a battle, and he himself and all that he possessed had been carried away. You know, it tells us that God speaketh once, yeah, twice. Yet man perceiveth it not. And this ought to have been a voice to Lot. God had allowed this circumstance to come so that he lost. Everything there and was himself and his family carried away captive, and yet he went back and dwelt there again. And you know God speaks to us too. Perhaps He has spoken to you, some of you, dear young people. Perhaps some disappointment or sorrow has come. And yet the Lord has come in in a wonderful way and delivered you and undertaken for you. And can it be that you have gone back again to the things of the world, to the things that don't satisfy? That's what happened in the case of poor Lot. And yet we see too beautiful picture with Abraham of love for his erring brother. And this is what we need, brethren, love for those who have perhaps missed the path. It's lovely to see that when Lot was carried away, that Abram at the very risk of his life and of all. That he had, he went down to deliver lot. Oh, do we seek the restoration of those. Those who have perhaps got away, is it on our hearts to seek their blessing and their good? Even if perhaps you say, well, it was their own fault, wasn't it? Wasn't it Lot's fault? Couldn't Abraham have said, well, I gave him a choice? He could have chosen to dwell in a different place than Sodom. He made his own choice. Now he's going to have to reap it in sorrow. Oh no, that isn't the way divine love talks. And we see Abraham going down there to deliver. His brother. And May God grant that we will have increasing love for one another, as it says in the 12TH chapter of Hebrews, when it speaks of God's hand and discipline upon His people. It said, Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Do we see someone with his hands hanging down? That's the first thing in getting. Away you get discouraged, in your hands hang down. And perhaps your heart may say, what's the use? And isn't it lovely to hear how the encouragement there lift up the hands that hang down. Oh, there's every reason to be encouraged when we think of what the Lord has done, when we think of his grace, when we think of his patience with us. And so lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees. The one that's just ready to fall hasn't fallen yet. Or how often we wait until the person has fallen before we try to help them along, and then it's too late. Perhaps, but it says, lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. Perhaps there's someone who is lame, spiritually lame. Oh, may we know how to be a help. Abraham was here. Abraham went after. Lot and brought him back. And then another thought too, that I believe, and I was thinking of primarily, is the great victory that God granted here. And one would think of it as a figure of the great victory that has been won for us. For it's only through what the Lord Jesus did upon the cross that there can be deliverance for us. For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived. We were once going on in the way of this world. We ourselves were once in our sins on our way to a lost eternity, and yet we know how God and His goodness. Delivered us from the power of Satan and set us free. Is there one here? Some young person, and you're still unsaved. Your heart is inside him because you haven't even got Christ. You haven't found him. There was a difference between Lot and Sodom and the people of Sodom themselves, The people of Sodom themselves. Had no love for the Lord. They were still going on in their sins. But in Lot's case it was different. He was an earning believer and he shouldn't have been there.

Although I will speak of it here in connection with a great victory that was won. And oh, don't we love to look back to Calvary's cross and see there a mighty victory that has been won. As we often sing, His be the victor's name, who fought the fight alone. Triumphant Saints no honor claim his conquest was their own. It's only through what Christ has done that there has been deliverance from our sins. And from the power of sin, and we have been set free in Christ. And so here Abraham returns now. And when he returns, there are two people that meet him. First of all, the king of Sodom went out to meet him, and then Melchizedek, king of Salem, he came to meet him. And isn't it true that when we first know, we first find the Lord Jesus as our Savior, then we find the very same thing happens too with us? The world comes along with some attraction, some lure, something that would take our hearts away. And it may be a very small thing, as we shall see. That might be used of the enemy, it might be something even as small as a thread, anything that the enemy can use to still keep us from wholeheartedly going on for the Lord Jesus. But it's lovely to see that although these two came out, first the king of Sodom, then there was another that came out, Melchizedek. And we know, as we read in Hebrews, that this Melchizedek is a picture to us. Of the Lord Jesus Himself. For it says of him, Thou art a priest forever. After the order of Melchizedek, and that Melchizedek was the dispenser of blessing to Abram and all. Isn't it lovely to know, dear young people, that the one that died for us on Calvary's cross, he's living for us up there, and he's the dispenser of all blessing to our souls, and that's forever. Thou art a priest forever. After the order of Melchizedek, having for once and for all accomplished the work of redemption, having once and for all settled. The question of our sins that we can look up and see that blessed precious Savior at God's right

hand, and as he's brought before us in Hebrews, ever living to make intercession for us, ever living there to maintain our souls in the enjoyment of the place that we have been brought into. And isn't it precious for us to look up and see that one? And when Satan comes with some temptation, it may be a very real 1. Something that's very hard to refuse to look up and know that there's one there. Who is able to supply the grace and the strength to overcome that temptation and to be faithful and loyal to the Lord Jesus? Oh yes, he is able. Well, Melchizedek came out and this is beautiful here. It says he brought forth bread and wine, bread and wine. I believe we have a precious little picture brought before us here. How the remembrance of the Lord Jesus in his death. And he comes with these two things in his hand, the bread and the wine, and he comes and meets Abram returning from this victory. And as it were to 1's own soul, it was the remembrance. It was the remembrance of the fact, something that he should never forget, that it wasn't by his own strength, by anything that he had done, that this victory had been won. It was by. God himself granting him the victory and all. How much? We need the remembrance of the Lord Jesus. How much we need it all one feels for one's own soul. How much we need to be reminded of what the Lord Jesus did for us. We know there are some just do it once every three months, some others do it once a month and some don't do it at all. Some never remember the Lord Jesus in his death. But as we had this morning about the importance of the first day of the week and it was read to us in the. Of Acts on the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread. And isn't it beautiful to see this Melchizedek coming out with these, the bread and the wine, to meet Abram? And old dear young person, if you belong to the Lord Jesus, can't you see Him, as it were, coming to you? Where the remembrance of his victory and what a privilege we have, it says.

As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes. Could you think of Abraham at this season, at this moment, refusing to receive the kindness that was bestowed? Refusing this when it was brought right to Him and presented to him and all dear young people, the Lord Jesus with all his male piercing hands is the one who broke the bread and administered the wine to his own. And now he's gone up on high, and with those blessed hands that have been pierced for us up there in glory, He has asked us to do this. Until he comes. What a privilege. Well, Abraham accepted this and I remember some years ago a young person. And. Feeling her own, feeling her own weakness, she said. She said, Well, I hesitated quite a while about taking my place at the Lord's table because I felt so unworthy in myself. But she said, I heard a brother make a remark that he thought that there was something that helped to preserve us when we were remembering the Lord, there was the remembrance of His. Sufferings and his death from week to week. That was a help to preserve. Of us. And she said that was an encouragement to me and I asked for my place because I knew how weak I was. I was thinking that was a reason for me not to remember him. But when he said that was the reason why I needed this precious privilege, because it drew back the heart's affections to Calvary. And in that way it did remind us of what the Lord Jesus had done. All we do need it. We do need this blessed privilege. And what a privilege. It's only hours until he comes. Just a short time ago, down in the Maritimes, I was asked to take the funeral of a dear man down there who had passed away. A believer in the Lord Jesus, I knew him as such. I had talked to him many times about the things of God. But he lived to be over 70 years old, and when I took his funeral, I thought this. How sad this man never remembered the Lord Jesus in his death. Never in his whole lifetime did he remember the Lord Jesus in his death. For him, I believe that he had trusted in him as his Savior, but he missed that wonderful opportunity. Well, it tells us here. In the 19th verse. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most high God. Possessor of heaven and earth. How that is, Melchizedek saw. Melchizedek saw that king of Sodom there, and he knew what the king of Sodom came to offer to Abram, no doubt. And so it says, he was blessed of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. Does the world look bright? Does it seem to offer something worthwhile? I know that when we're young, it does look very bright. What it offers looks very, very attractive and. Often hard to say no to the things that are offered to us, but when we think of the fact that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, when we think that in the eighth of Romans, it says that we're heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. All think of all that the world has to offer, but what is that in comparison with the fact? That you and I, dear young people who know the Lord is our Savior are identified with the one who is the possessor of heaven and earth and he has made us his joint heirs. Romans 8 says heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Wouldn't you think it very strange if I was worrying about a little plot of land on one of these streets here if. If within a. Few days I was to be the joint heir of the whole street and everything that was on it. You'd say, well, why worry about that little thing? It's only a few days till you're going to have the enjoyment of it all. And dear young people, that's what's ahead of us. We're joined heirs with Christ, and when we possess it ply there won't be any sorrows. Or any tears or any disappointments or any sickness. Tomorrow there won't be anything in the flesh within us to hinder the enjoyment of it either. And that's all. That's what's ahead of us. Well, the possessor of heaven and earth came out to Abram.

And he blessed him and all how richly blessed you and I have been. Oh, if we could only enjoy more of those blessings that we have in Christ. They're all ours. We may not be enjoying them. We may have just picked up, as it were, the first jewel out of the jewel box. And we say it's wonderful to be saved and to know that my sins are forgiven. But all there's infinitely more than that. We have been blessed with all spiritual blessings. In heavenly places in Christ. Then it tells us here. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. That is when Abram realized all this, when all this laid hold of his soul without even being asked, what was the result? Why it says He gave? He gave. Well, when you and I think what the Lord Jesus has done for us, it's not hard for us to give. Because when we know that he has done so much for us. Why, surely it's our joy, And how much should we give? Well, it tells us a here that Abraham gave tithes of all. But in Romans 12 and verse one, it says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. We know that when David had won a great victory. Jonathan came out and Jonathan. Stripped himself of all of he possessed and he laid it down, gave it to David. But he didn't. He didn't identify himself with David. He didn't give himself in other words. He didn't follow David in his path of rejection, although he gave so freely. And you may be giving very freely, and God would have us to realize the Lord has a claim over us. But all, how lovely the little hymn love the transcends our highest powers, demands our soul, our life, our all. Dear young person, I ask myself, and I ask you, have we ever got down in the Lord's presence and said, Oh Lord, everything that I possess, every desire of my heart myself, all belong to Thee, all. Have we taken that place? You'll never be a really happy. Christian, until you acknowledge the Lord's claims over you completely and totally. Oh, you say, I'm almost afraid to do that. He might ask me to do something I'm not prepared to do. Can you doubt the law of one who died for us, and one who is going to share His throne with us and will not be satisfied until every tear has been wiped away and everyone of His own have been supremely blessed with Him? Oh dear young people, surely. We can't doubt love like that. Don't be afraid. It'll be the beginning, I say, of real happiness in your Christian life when you take that place, when you present yourself to Him and seek His grace. Oh, I don't mean that there may not be failure. We often fail, Each one of us fail in the path. But is it our desire? Is it our are? Are we willing to acknowledge His claims? While Abraham without being asked at all, he gave tithe. But I have sometimes said about Jonathan, you know, it has struck me in reading about Jonathan that David never asked Jonathan to go with him to The Cave of Adullam. Why didn't he ask him? Well, I have thought like this, that if love in the heart of Jonathan didn't make him want to go with David, that David wouldn't ask him. He wanted him to be constrained by his love. And in Judaism. They were required to give. 110th That was the tithe that they were required, but in Christianity there is no such

thing as a tithe. And because if you and I are constrained by His love, why? We just want to acknowledge His claims over everything. And He is worthy. He's done all that love could do to win our hearts and will continue to do so for all eternity. Well now the king of Sodom speaks, And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. I'd like to turn to 1St Kings 20 and read a passage there. First Kings. 20. The first verse.

And Ben Haddad, the king of Syria, gathered all his hosts together. And there were 30 and 2 Kings with him, and horses and Chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab, king of Israel, into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben Haddad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine, thy wives also, and thy children even the goodliest, are mine. And the king of Israel answered and said, My Lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine and all that I have. What a sad picture we have here. Here's the enemy comes up and he said the very best of your children and all that you possess are mine. And we find Ahab says yes, according to your saying. There I am thine, he said, and he acknowledged the claim of the king of Syria over all that he had over his children. And here the King of Sodom comes out. He doesn't go quite that far. He said, give me the persons, and you take the goods. All dear young people, as one looks into your faces this afternoon, I can hear the very same thing as though the enemy were saying, Give me the persons, give me the persons. He wants you, dear young people, He wants, he wants all that you have to be for himself. And so the king of Sodom said, just let me have the persons. I don't care how rich you get, Abram. You can have all that you want, and the devil doesn't care how rich you get in this world. Why, you may be very pleased if you should make a success of life in that way, maybe very pleased, because very often those things rob the heart of Christ. It's you that he wants, dear young people. It's your ability, it's your time. It's everything you have that he wants. Give me the persons, he said. And what is your reply going to be? It's sad to think, Ahab said. According to thy saying, I am thine he acknowledged the claim of the king of Syria over him and all his children and all that he possessed, all dear young people. Isn't this a challenge that comes to us? Who do we say we belong to? When it really comes down to the point of fact and circumstances are before us, the Lord on one hand of the world and the other, what is our answer is our answer to the world. Yes, My time belongs to you. My ability belongs to you. What I have belongs to you. Or do we turn to the Lord, as we have been saying and say. Lord Jesus, I am thine He are not your own. He are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Well, we know what a sad thing it was in Ahab's life and what a sad end came to poor Ahab and all. How important dear young people want to see young people sit in the very seats in the conferences and they have listened to the word. They have heard similar thoughts to what 1 is expressing this afternoon. The challenge has come in their life and where are they today? They have given themselves over to following the world and all. I appeal to you, dear young people, the Lord Jesus is coming soon. He wants you. He wants you because He loves you. The world wants you for what it can get from you. And they will take all that you have, every bit of your talent and ability and everything, and take every moment of your time. But all the Lord Jesus wants you for what He can give to you. He'll fill your heart not only in this world. But for all eternity if you receive him and follow him. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have left up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet. Here Abram said, I have a reason for refusing. He didn't just say no, no sometimes. When the world comes to you and you just say no, they keep on bothering you. They keep asking you. But you know, it's a great thing to give a reason of the hope that is in us with meekness and fear. It's lovely when we see. An answer given not only no, but telling. Why? Because the king of Sodom didn't bother Abram anymore after this. Because Abram had given a reason for his decision. And when they come to you at school and I ask you to do this or do that when they come to you in the office.

When they come to you, perhaps neighbors in the street and ask you to do this or that, it's nice not only to refuse, but to do what Abraham did here. He said, I've lift up mine eyes unto the most high God, unto the Lord, the most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. In other words, he said, I have a reason for refusing. I the longed Christ. I know a dear lady who was saved a few years ago. She used to go on with the world, used to go out and play bridge and go on in the world's ways. When she found the Lord as her savior. Why? They asked her if she'd come and she said, she said, well, I could say no, that I don't, that I won't go, but I feel I should tell you the reason why I don't go. And she said the reason is that I have a new life and the new life that I have enjoys new things. Yes. They never asked you to go again. Because she brightly confessed the Lord Jesus to her friends as her Savior. They didn't phone up next week and say will you come as she'd made an excuse and say no I'm sorry I can't come this week, I'm sorry I have something on that night I can't come. Probably would continue to bother you. Oh dear young people, have you looked up your hand to the Lord? And do you realize that that one who has blessed you is the possessor of heaven and earth? That you're not giving up something that at all compares with what you have received in return. When Paul spoke of what he gave up, he said, I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things. It might have been very hard for Paul to have parted. With some of those things, but when he had something better. There was no difficulty because he counted those things, but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus is Lord. And so I'm not here to try and impose certain rules and tell you what you should go to and what you shouldn't go to. But I am here to say how much do you and I realize what the Lord Jesus has done for us. And if we realize that, I'm sure it'll be easy for us to do like Abram did and. Take a faithful stand and said, I've lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. And then he goes on and tells the reason for his refusal and how much he was refusing. Did he say, well, I can go along with you a little way? I can't go too far. There's some things that Christians can do, but not everything. No, he refused. From a thread. A thread? What a little thing, Little thing that might hang on your clothes and you pull it off and drop it down on the floor. That's nothing you say. But all dear young people, did you ever stop to think what a job the threads have done in your clothes? All the clothes that I have on, all the buttons of my suit here and everything, What are they held by? Threads. They're all held together with threads. Such a little unimportant thing as a thread. Maybe the thing that's linking your eye up with the world, such a tiny thing, but it has formed a link with the world. And when that seamstress starts to sow, that thread goes in. More and more cloth is bound together, more buttons are tied on, and so the whole garment comes out and it's all assembled and brought together with threads. Little things. Oh dear young people. Remember what the bridegroom said to his bride? Whose heart had grown cold to him, he said, Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes. He said to her, Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face. She hadn't sought his company. She wasn't in near enough to him for him to even hear her voice. Does the Lord hear your voice often? Do you often look up to Him in prayer? And ask his help and his grace and strength, as well as praising Him for what he has done. He said, Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face. Does he see your face at the meeting? Do the brethren count you as one of the regulars who are always there, as much as you possibly can be there? Oh, how lovely it is to hear the bridegroom speaking in that way that he wanted to hear her voice, he wanted to see her face. And he said, Thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is comely. And one was impressed recently in reading in the Psalm of Solomon, to notice that not once through the whole book of the Song of Solomon does he ever reproach the bride.

Oh, I'm afraid if it had been you or I, we would have reproached her and say how indifferent she is to his love, how callous she seems to be. Never once did he reproach her. How did he draw her? He always sought to draw her by his love. And when she didn't answer the door, he

said, open to me, my love, my dove, my undefiled. Wasn't that touching? He saw beauty in her, although she had lost the sense of. Some of the beauty that was in him, he put his hand in by the door, but she had locked the door. He let her see that pierced hand. Oh dear young people, the Lord Jesus is not reproaching you, but He's won your heart if you belong to Him and He wants you to be drawn and perhaps a little thread that's tying you to the world. I remember one dear young person whom I knew, and she gave up almost all her friends. Just one worldly friend she kept. I remember her saying. I've just got one worldly friend that I haven't broken with. Just one. But as time went on, that one worldly friend drew that girl back into the world. There was a thread. There was something that she hadn't snapped, and that's all we find, Abram said here. No, not even a thread. Small thing, but an important thing. And the shoe latchet, that is the shoe light should be what ties on the shoe. And perhaps, perhaps you're committed to some course of action. Maybe you've made some promise and you're committed to some course of action. Just like you put the shoe on and you tie it or you latch it there. It's fastened now, all ready to go. And that that shoe latchet or that that? 2 lakes or whatever it may be, that's what has decided you in a certain course of action. And how often a young person has committed themselves to some course of action, made a promise to some friend. Made a promise to somebody and then, as it were, it's all tied up, he says. I won't like, I won't take anything that ties me up to the world or commits me to some course of action. You wanted to be free to acknowledge the claims of the one who had won his heart, the one who was everything to him. Oh, dear young people, the Lord wants you to be free. Not to be bound, but to be free to acknowledge his claims. Over you, Abram said not a thread, not a shoe latchet. And in that same Song of Solomon, I think it's lovely to see the bridegroom looking at the feet of the bride there. And he says, how beautiful are thy feet with shoes. All prince's daughter now she was near enough to him to be in his company, and he looks at her shoes. And he said, how beautiful are thy feet with shoes, dear young people, would the Lord Jesus. Of you or me, That our walk is beautiful. Isn't it lovely? That He should appreciate the fact that we seek to walk to please Him? He does. He looks at our spiritual shoes. He knows in whose company we're walking. Are we really seeking to go on for His glory? And then he said. That I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou should have say I have made Abram rich. Yes, every link with the world causes the world to have a claim upon us. As dear Mr. Darby said, the nearer you get to the world, the higher you get in the world, the nearer you get to its Prince. And all these things make us. Fear the world, make us look to them instead of looking to the Lord. And so he said, No, I want, I won't take anything, lest you should say that I, that you've made Abram rich. He refuses at all. He has been blessed by the one who is the possessor of heaven and earth. But now I think this is nice, what he says in the last verse, save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Anar, Eshkol and Mamre, let them take their portion, in other words. He doesn't make a decision for these young men that had gone with him. He lets them make their decision and how important this is because I can't decide something for you. But all how lovely it is as we often feel with our children when we see there's an exercise. You know, when I see a person and they're doing something that perhaps I couldn't fully agree with myself and I hear them say.

Well, I do want to please the Lord in the matter anyway. Oh, you know, it's a lovely thing. When you see that, and so Abraham said, well, I'm going to let these young people say for themselves, and the Lord is listening for you to say, He wants you to say for yourself, how much does the love of Christ have a claim upon your heart? I can't speak for you, you can't speak for me, but you can speak for yourself. What portion? What is your portion? What is your desire? May God grant that our desire will be to please the Lord Jesus who has done so much for us. Well, now in the 15th chapter. After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. All the Lord knew that when Abram had taken this stand that he was going to need encouragement. He was going to need encouragement and all. I believe that it's something that is so needed in these last days. We need to be encouraged. It's easy to discourage, It's easy to say things that discourage. But the Lord comes to Abram after this and he says, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield. That's thy protection and thy exceeding great reward. As though the Lord should say, Abram, I'll protect you, and you'll never lose anything worthwhile. While by seeking to follow me, you'll never lose anything that's really worthwhile if you seek to follow the Lord Jesus, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward. Now I'd just like to say a little more on this encouragement. You know, amongst us, we have learned that it's not right to flatter. It's not right to try and blow a person up because that might do them a great deal of harm. But sometimes I think that we fail. To speak that little word of encouragement that is often needed. How often when someone does something for the Lord, the enemy is always ready afterwards to discourage. He doesn't want to see anyone go on for the Lord. And just as surely as you try to do something, there will be something come in very shortly afterwards to discourage you. And sometimes we might fail to speak that little word that might. Encourage all Dear young people, let us cultivate the habit of encouraging one another in the past, encouraging one another. No, David, Rather, Jonathan on one occasion went out to fight against the Garrison of the Philistines. And when he saw the sharp rocks in the way, it appears that he was just about going to turn back. And his armor bearer said, Turn thee, behold, I am with thee, do all that is in thine heart. And that little word of encouragement was the turning of the whole circumstance. And he and his armor bearer went forward, and God granted a great victory. And I believe that eternity alone will reveal how often a little word of encouragement. Spoken at the right time was perhaps the turning of the chord. Course of a Christian that affected the whole of the rest of that Christian's life. Oh, May God give us to know how to speak that word when it's needed. The Lord came and said, fear not Abram. And I love to think of another instance in the life of Paul. When he had been before, when he had been arrested and brought into prison. There might be little thoughts rise in his mind as to how he shouldn't have gone up there to Jerusalem, and isn't this lovely? The Lord stood by him that night and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, For as thou hast born testimony for me at Jerusalem, thou must also bear testimony at Rome. The Lord encouraged him and all. That must have strengthened the beloved apostle in the days. That lay ahead because he was in prison for a long time and he would never forget how the Lord stood by on the very first night, said fear not, fear not.

Thy exceeding great reward, and Abram said, Lord God. What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and a steward of my house is this Eleazar of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. Abram and sought to be faithful. He had refused all that the king of Sodom had offered. He had accepted the bread and wine. He had given tithes. He had seemingly done everything up to this point that we could command. And we could say surely the Lord was pleased with Abram's faith and faithfulness. But there was one thing, and that was why had the Lord not granted him that one request that He so much desired? And it may be that there's a young person here and you're saying your heart right now. Well, I have tried to follow the Lord, but there's something that I've asked Him for and He hasn't granted it to me. Why hasn't he? Some of my friends seem to get along, some of my friends that are perhaps not. Careful to walk in godliness. And the Lord seems to have denied it to me. He seems to have allowed me to suffer instead of encouraging me. And that was the way Abram felt here. He said, well, how is this? What I desired was to have a son, and the Lord is withholding it from me, what I desired. And so it may be that there's someone here and that thought is rising in your mind and the enemy is using it. To hinder you from going on with the Lord Jesus. The enemy is using it to discourage you. And you say I sit in the meetings and I'm encouraged, but that thought keeps. Bumping up in my mind all the time, Why doesn't the Lord undertake for me? Why doesn't he come in in this matter or that matter? And so that continues to press upon you. He said I go childless, the thing that I wanted. And the Lord had even said that he would

give him a son. And why was it not? Why was it not fulfilled? If God was really seeking his happiness, why had this been? Withholding from him. Because it was a walk of faith, was a walk of faith and so. Isn't this lovely? In the fourth verse. And behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying. This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels. Shall be thine heir. Had God forgotten the promise? Had God forgotten that he had said that to his seed he would give that whole land? Previously all God hadn't forgotten it, and God hasn't forgotten one of his promises. We might forget, and we may think sometimes that God has forgotten to be gracious, but He doesn't forget. Our names are graven on the palms of His hands. Our names are upon His heart as well as upon His shoulders. He's carrying us along. Well, what does the Lord do to Abram? Isn't this lovely, this fifth verse? And he brought him forth a broad and said, look thou toward the heaven, Isn't this lovely? He doesn't tell him how this desire of his heart is going to be fulfilled. He doesn't tell him how soon it's going to be fulfilled and his faith was sorely tested after this for a long time. He doesn't tell him how he brings them out, and he points his eyes havenward, and he says, Look now toward heaven, Dear young people, I want to impress those words upon you. Look now toward heaven. Look now toward heaven. Are you and I looking that way? There may be disappointments here. The end of all things is at hand. We may see more difficult times than we have ever seen before. We may see more weakness in the testimony, and we may see greater breakdown of everything in this world, but all when we look toward heaven, he said. Now count the number of the stars. Well, you know, in those days that he had actually tried to count them. But those who have looked through the powerful telescopes of today tell us that there were many that were beyond the natural vision, many that were beyond the natural vision, millions of them that couldn't be seen with the naked eye. Dear young people, I want to tell you the same thing, that if you get the telescope of faith and look up into the sky, there's millions of things. That the natural eye can't see. There are just millions of them and some of those, some of those. A brother when I was away gave me a little paper that he said there's one star that is 300 times larger than our sun and he said it can't be seen with the naked eye.

You look at that sun, you can hardly, you can hardly look at it for a half second. It's too much for your eyes. They're blazing light in the sun. But beyond the sun, beyond anything that the natural eye can see, is a *300 times as big as our sun. Oh, dear, young people. I remember a remark in Mr. Darby. He said, he said this. How often does one forbidden thing hide from our view 1000 blessings? And how often there is that because we were looking at things with the naked eye, that those greater and more wonderful things that God has in store are hidden from us. But they're all there. Faith sees them. Faith looks beyond present circumstances. Faith counts upon God. Faith knows that he is going to work out everything. After the counsel of his own will and faith rests. And so isn't this lovely in the sixth verse? And he believed in the Lord. And he believed in the Lord. Hadn't Abram believed in the Lord before? I would say he had. He had come out from UR of the Chaldees long before. He had had his tent and his altar before this. I used to sometimes puzzle a little at that hymn Keep us Lord all, keep us cleaving to thyself and still believing. Why does it say still believing? All because faith is continually put to the test all through the Christian life. But all how blessed it is when we look about present things and if there's something that's pressing upon your heart that is threatening to rob you of your. In the Lord that's threatening to even spoil these meetings for you because you can't rise above some circumstance that's come into your life. May God in his grace take you out abroad. May He enlarge the vision of faith, and that you will look toward heaven and not only the things that can be seen, but at the untold blessings that cannot be seen, the unsearchable riches of Christ. And all that, it's all ours. And so how lovely these words. And he believed the law. He believed. In the Lord, may the Lord grant and will not only believe in Him to the saving of our souls, but that we may also believe in Him for all this difficulties, all the circumstances of life's pathway. And I would say to you, dear young people, in closing, there will be many times your faith will be put to the test. There will be many times it isn't a decision that you can make once for all, but all the blessedness of making the Lord Jesus himself. The object of your heart, and as we know what He has done for us in the past. We know the victory that He has won. Faith, vision is directed to what is ahead of us. A God grant that we'll be kept and that it will be said of us. He believed in the Lord. And when some problem arises and some difficulty in you see no solution and you can understand why the Lord has allowed it, repeat those words. He believed in the Lord. He believed in the Lord. May God grant that our faith will look up until that blessed time that faith is changed to sight, and we'll be with him, like him, and know and enjoyfully all that's in his heart for us. Shall we sing that little hymn? 256 Praise the Savior, ye who know him, who can tell how much we owe him gladly Let us render to him all we have and are, 256.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 14:17-24: Restoration and Victory

Poor Lot lost everything and was carried captive himself. How little he realized, when he “pitched his tent toward Sodom,” that such a sorrow was going to come upon him and his family! And we ourselves are only safe when we walk in obedience to God and His Word.

God loved Lot in spite of his failure and undertook for his restoration. Abram, who was in communion with the mind of God, loved his nephew Lot too. He felt for him in his sorrow and made plans to help him. He might have said, “It serves him right,” especially after the quarrel there had been between their herdsmen a short time before, but Divine love does not act that way. Divine love forgives and still loves. Surely this is the way God has acted with us. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins” (Psalm 103:10). If God gave us what we deserved, it would be eternal judgment, but He has forgiven us frankly and fully. We should always act the same way with others and forgive them no matter how badly they treat us.

Temptation After Victory

Abram did not love in word only, but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18). He went to Lot’s assistance at once, putting his own life in danger to do it. He recovered not only Lot and all his goods, but he recovered others, too, and came back in triumph. We are just as sure to have victory when we are doing the will of God as we are sure to have defeat when we are not.

After such a fine victory, a great temptation soon confronted Abram, for when we are able to do something for the Lord, Satan often tries to rob us of the blessing by getting our eyes off the Lord. We need strength from above after the victory, as well as before it. Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, came to meet him with bread and wine. Then he blessed Abram in the name of the Most High God, which is the title which the Lord will take when He reigns over the earth in a soon-coming day. He will be the “Possessor of heaven and earth” then, but as yet He has not taken possession of His inheritance. Abram believed this in faith, owning His claims by giving tithes to Him of all he possessed.

Refusing the Gifts of the World

Having received the bread and wine, and the blessing of the Most High God, he was prepared to refuse what the king of Sodom was about to offer him. The king of Sodom told him to keep all he had recovered except the people. Abram had never wanted to live in the wicked city of Sodom, but now the temptation before him was just this — did he want any of the riches of Sodom when they were offered to him?

He had never sought after those things, but this was a more difficult decision to make when they were offered to him. However his mind was made up — he refused them completely. He would not receive even a thread or a shoelatchet from the king of Sodom. Only faith in God can enable us to make such decisions for the Lord's glory.

There is something very beautiful in the way Abram acted here. While he refused for himself, he did not refuse for the young men with him who had eaten of Sodom's food. However he gave them the example of his own faith, which should have been a word to them. May our lives be an example to others too!

1. How did Abram love Lot in deed and in truth?

2. Mechizedek is a wonderful figure of the Lord Jesus Christ. He's mentioned in Hebrews 7 where the writer draws attention to what makes the Lord Jesus so excellent. How does the Spirit of God use this Old Testament story to teach a New Testament lesson?

3. If you've never read Notes on the Pentateuch by C. H. Mackintosh, you would find it a real treat for your soul. It would take a really long time to read through the 1,964 pages that make up the set of 6 books on the Pentateuch, but I'm sure if you read all the way through, you would never regret it. You can find the same material for free by browsing the writings of C. H. Mackintosh in the Authors section of bibletruthlibrary.org.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 14:1-16: Deliverance From Pits of Sin

In our chapter God tells us of a battle which took place in the vale of Siddim. This valley was full of slime-pits, and it would remind us of the character of this poor, sinful world which is filled with snares and pitfalls of all kinds. Oh how many dear boys and girls are caught in the slippery paths of sin and fall there, just as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell in the valley of Siddim. No doubt these kings thought they could get safely through the valley. They thought they could escape the slime-pits, but they could not, and they fell there. This should be a solemn warning to us, for we are sometimes very self-confident, and think we are safe, even at times when we are in great danger. God's Word has marked out the right path through this dark world, and we are only safe when walking in obedience to Him.

"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23).

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6).

Brought Out of a Horrible Pit

Let us remember the necessity of the daily reading of the Word and prayer, for one wrong act leads to another, and it is much easier to get into the "slime-pits" than to get out of them. The Scriptures tell us, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). No true child of God can ever be lost, but Satan knows how to trip us up, and we should hearken to the warnings God has given us in His Word.

Perhaps some of our young readers are unsaved and have fallen in the snares of sin, and you know you cannot deliver yourself. We have good news for you! The Lord can deliver you. Yes, He is able and willing to do it — wondrous Saviour! David the king speaks of this blessed fact in Psalm 40. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." The Lord will do all this, and more, for any sinner who calls upon Him. The Rock upon whom we are set is Christ, and the song is unto Him who has redeemed us. Will you let Him save you today?

Satisfaction in Him

Lot dwelt in Sodom, and so he had his sad part in this great battle. Yes, if we try to fit in with, and find our portion in this Sodom world, we will have to share its sorrows. Abram was outside of all these worldly battles and struggles, for the Lord was the portion of his inheritance. He did not need to seek after the "well watered plains" of Sodom. He was truly satisfied with his tent and altar, because he had the promises of God. "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

Those of us who are saved have all we need in Christ. We are passing through this world it is true, but our home is with Christ in glory. If we have learned to find our satisfaction in Him, we will soon find that the vanities of this dark scene are no better than the boasted treasures of Sodom. May our hearts be able to say like one of old, "I have Christ, what want I more!"

1. What was dangerous about the Vale of Siddim?

2. Reading God's Word can help keep us out of the "slime-pits." What are some ways that the Lord uses His Word to direct our steps? You'll find several in Psalm 119.

3. An excellent encouragement to prayerfully read God's Word is the booklet The Bible: Its Sufficiency and Supremacy by C. H. Mackintosh.

Conference: 1977, Abraham

Address—G.H. Hayhoe

Today we were speaking about Abraham and I'd like to go on, look a little more at what God has given to us in connection with Abraham, shall we Read in the 13th chapter, beginning at the fifth verse. We will read more later, but just this part of the chapter, Genesis 13, verse five. And

Lord also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Was not able to bear them that they might dwell together, for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abrams cattle and the herdsmen of Lots cattle, and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwell then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou will take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even like under the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. And Lot journeyed east, and they separated themselves, the one from the other. And Abraham dwelled in the land of Canaan, And Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. And the Lord said unto Abram, After that Lot was separated from him. Lift up now, thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art. Northward and southward, and eastward and westward, for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall I seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee. Then Abraham removed his tent, and came and dwelled in the plain of Mamra, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. Well, we noticed yesterday about God calling Abraham from the Ur of the Chaldeans. How at first he only came part way about then how God worked in his heart, and we saw how that after his father had died, he then left Heron and came all the way into the land that God had purposed for them. It shows us, as we remarked, how God sometimes has to use trials in order to stir up in our hearts more response to His claims, so that we might be more yielded to Him. But then later on when there was a famine in the land, how Abraham, discouraged by the famine, went down into Egypt and there we know how that there was departure. He didn't have his tent, that is, he lost his Pilgrim character. He didn't have his altar because he had not the same approach into the presence of God. But he did prosper down there. He denied his proper relationship to his wife. He didn't acknowledge that she was really his wife. He didn't deny any relationship. But as we noticed, he denied the relationship that he he was really as she was really his wife. And so you know what an important thing it is for us to realize that we are a heavenly people. We're a spouse. The church is the bride of Christ. And Paul said, I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ. Sometimes we can say, yes, I know I belong to the Lord, I'm one of his children. But are we walking in this world as those who recognize that our home is up there, that we are to form part of the glorious bride of Christ associated with him up there in another day? Well, Abram denied this and bought down there in the land of Egypt. He became very wealthy. He seemed to prosper and get along very well, and so that when he decided to leave the land of Egypt and go back into Canaan, why he had, as it tells us, he had men, servants and maidservants, and she she ***** and camels. And it tells us in the second verse of this 13th chapter he was very rich in cattle.

In silver and in gold. So it is sometimes when we get away from the Lord, we may prosper materially, but to prosper materially is not always the best thing for us. Sometimes it can be a great hindrance to our souls because those things get hold of us. And the Bible says the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. And it's so easy for us, perhaps unaware to ourselves. To set our hearts on things down here, and it tells us, set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Well, we noticed too how Abraham was restored and he came back out of Egypt. He came to the very point where he had left. That place where he had his tent and his altar at the beginning. And so we could say that it is very beautiful to see that he truly was restored. We also see that Lot came along with him. A lot seemed to be one who locked in the faith of others and not in his own personal faith. And you know every one of us who professed to know the Lord is our Savior and perhaps who profess to walk in the truth. Are going to be tested sooner or later as to whether we really have our eyes on the Lord. Or whether we are just doing it, perhaps because of friends or relatives, some influence that has been brought to bear upon us. And with Lot, it appears that the influence of Abraham had a great effect upon him. But no matter how much we may be helped by some other, who is walking by faith, and we can help others when we're walking by faith. Let us remember that each one of us must give account of himself. God and you and I need to be personally before the Lord. Are we reading His Word for ourselves? Are we in prayer before Him? Are we holding personal communion with Him? Are we in the path where we are because we believe it's the path of obedience to the Lord? Or is it just because it's a nice group of people or our friends and relatives are there? Sooner or later we're going to be tested. Well, so the testing came in Lot's life. It tells us here that they had come back and were now both of them so very wealthy. And here it tells us the land wouldn't bear them so they could dwell together. And there was a strife, a jealousy arose between them. Isn't this often true? Very often we can trace our departure away from the Lord to something that came in some kind of strife, some kind of jealousy, some kind of feeling, and that started it. And then how something else happens and here we find Abraham and Lot become separated one from another. All how we need to watch those things. That so naturally rise in our hearts. It tells us in Peter, laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and evil speakings, there's so many things that can grow like weeds in our hearts. And if we allow them and if we don't judge them, they may not seem very great at first, but they always lead to other things. The breakup of the first family in the world was through jealousy. We know that it was because. Cain was jealous. He was jealous because God had accepted Abel and he had rejected him and it made him very angry. His countenance fell. So angry he was that he actually slew his brother. All how true it is, as the Bible says, and jealousy is cruel as the grave. Well, here was this strife, but it's nice to see here the spirit that Abraham showed. Abraham was the one that felt this most. We don't read about Lot being too much disturbed over the strife. He wasn't walking near enough to the Lord to be concerned for if you notice in the end of the seventh verse it says and the Canaanite and the parasite dwell then in the land. In the 12Th chapter and the sixth verse, the end of the verse it says in the Canaanite was then in the land. It is when Abram came into the land first.

There were enemies in the land, but Abraham went on in faith. He pitched his tent, he built his altar, and he went on counting upon God, even although there were enemies in the land. And the enemy is always busy to hinder our spiritual progress. But why does it tell us that when this strife came about, it says the Canaanite and the Perazite dwell then in the land? All because the world looks on and sees this sort of thing. How sad it is when the world has to witness that these things exist among those who profess to know the Lord. It tells us, you know. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another. But where was the evidence of it? When they saw these two men who professed to be men of faith and they couldn't even dwell together, they couldn't go on in the path of faith together. Well, I believe God mentions this and there seemed to be more attention paid in the fact that it tells us that not only the Canaanite but also the Perazite and dwell then in the land. Abram was exercised, he was concerned about it, and he said to. Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Isn't this very gracious on the part of Abram? Because in reality, Abram was Lot's uncle. He was the older one and he could have said to lot, well now I'm going to have first choice because I'm the older one and he might have easily taken a position like that because we're told to respect age. And he could have easily said, well, I, I'm the older one and so I'm going to have the first choice. But isn't it nice to see here that I believe we could say that? Abraham committed his cause to the Lord. He just knew that the Lord was going to take care of him. Like the Scripture says, commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him, and

he shall bring it to pass. And I believe that when he took this gracious attitude, he was sure that God would take care of his interests. God would protect him, and He most certainly did. He doesn't fail a trusting heart. He tells us trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. So he didn't say, well I think I know which is the best part of the land to dwell in. I'm going to choose it. No, he just left the whole matter in the Lord's hands and he said lot. You can take first choice. And he said, if you go one way, I'll go the other. And so he gave Lot the opportunity. But what did Lot do? Well, Lot, as we have noticed before, was not really walking in personal faith. And we also mentioned on Lords Day, and I call attention to it again, that Abram, even loyal man of such wonderful faith. When he had failed and gone down into Egypt because of the famine. He had given Lot a taste of some things that hindered Lot in his later life. And if I get away from the Lord, I may have an effect, a very adverse effect on some other Christian, and I might get restored. But perhaps the harm I've done to someone else will not be corrected. And this is a very sad thing. This often takes place because none of us liveth to himself, and none of us dieth to himself. So poor Lot had got his first taste of those things that he was going after through his Uncle Abraham taking him down into Egypt. And so it tells us that when he lifted up his eyes and looked on the land of the valley of. Plain of Jordan, I should say, down towards Sodom and Gomorrah. He said that just looks like Zoar down in Egypt. When had he seen Zor down in Egypt? When Abram took him down and there was the effect that he had. We know of another case in the New Testament and we remember how Barnabas was the uncle of John Mark and we find how that when Barnabas wanted.

John Mark and he wasn't spiritually up to it. It caused a contention and a Barnabas, the uncle of John Mark took John Mark along with him. And we know that there were some lost time in John Marks life too. Thank God John Mark was afterwards restored because God is gracious. But these things I'm sure blessings for us from which we can all learn. So he decided to go down and it tells us they separated themselves, the one from the other. It's a sad thing when God's people, as I say, cannot walk together. But the scripture also says how can two walk together except they be agreed. There needs to be a mutual agreement to follow the Lord. To live for him. And there wasn't this mutual agreement with these two. Abram now restored desires to go on for the Lord, but Lot didn't. And so there wasn't that happy unity of heart. It's a it's a nice thing to see when there is, like in the early disciples, it says the multitude of the disciples were of one heart and one soul. They were united in their desire to give the Lord His rightful place. They prayed together, they served the Lord together, and they had fellowship together. And continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, but here. We see a coldness of heart coming in. We see strife coming in. We see them. Separating one from another and poor lot going down towards Sodom. I want you to notice he didn't go to Sodom all at once. He started that in that direction. It tells us in the. 11 Verse. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom. That little expression he dwelled in the cities of the plain seemed to show that there was not stability in his Christian or in his pathway. Why you can't dwell in more than one city at a time. And instead he dwelled in the cities of the plain. He was sort of unsettled in his path. And he was going, as we see, in the wrong direction. He was heading towards Sodom. But you know, we don't really. Just all of a sudden do something that is disastrous in our lives, There's usually something that leads up to it. Just like there was with Peter. It tells us that he was asleep when the Lord told him to watch. It tells us that he was boasting. When he should be asking the Lord for help, it tells us that he was following a far off. It tells us that he was warming himself by the world's fire. And all these were just steps leading up to what finally happened when in the company of the world, he denied his Lord. But it didn't all happen at once. Departure doesn't come into our lives suddenly if we. Get self confident if we allow strife in our hearts. If we're looking away from the land that God has given and looking in the wrong direction and setting our hearts on. Wrong things, our feet will soon follow, and one thing will lead to another. And this was the course of lot. I say he didn't get to Sodom all at once, but he finally got there, because that was the direction he was traveling. And so it tells us what kind of people were there. The 13th verse. But the man of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord. Exceedingly. God was greatly displeased with those wicked cities, and later on, as we know, He rained fire and brimstone upon them. Then I might just mention, in this day of the breakdown of morals, in this day when we see a marriage almost beginning to disappear, this is a solemn warning from God. Now that was the sin that was. Being carried out there in Sodom and Gomorrah. The idea of morality and marriage was gradually disappearing. God speaks of the days of Noah and says they ate and they drank and they planted, they build it, they married and were given in marriage. That's the way he speaks about the days of Noah. But when he talks about the time of lot, he says they ate and they drank, they planted, they build it, but it doesn't say they married and gave in marriage.

The marriage ceremony and the marriage sanctity was really disappearing. Now this is a solemn warning, and it tells us in June that God showed just what he thought about that sort of thing by bringing down the awful judgment of what is called eternal fire upon those cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us be warned about the moral laxity of the days in which we live. God has set certain standards of morals in His Word, and it's not for us to look lightly upon them. It's not for us to join hands with the new morality, as it's called, of our present day. God hasn't lowered His standards just because men have. Well, this was the direction in which Lot was traveling. Was He a real believer? Yes. If you read in Peter it says that righteous man. Dwelling among them vexed his righteous soul from day-to-day. With their unlawful deeds, he was a true believer. He even remonstrated with the people and told him not to do so wickedly. But he dwelled among them. He, he seemed to, shall I say, be quite content to make that his dwelling place, a place for his family, a place for his interests. And as we know later on, he lost everything. In Sodom he had a saved soul but a lost life. Well, now they were separated and I'm sure that Abraham must have felt this because Abraham must have thought a good deal of Lot and he was the one who had come with him from her of the Chaldees. And they had been companions in their measure in the pathway of faith for some time. And I'm sure that Abram must have felt this. Any true hearted Christian can't help but feel it when. He separated from other real Christians. If it doesn't bother you to be separated from other real Christians, there's something wrong, because it tells us we're taught of God to love one another. We may not always be able to walk together because we have to be obedient, and Abraham couldn't walk with Lot in his disobedient path, but he did feel it, and we'll see afterwards how very kind he was and what nice thoughts he had. Toward a lot, even though he couldn't go along with him. This was all very beautiful and showed the reality of his faith. So on the 14th verse. And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward, and eastward and westward, for all the land which thou seest. To thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. You know, God knows in our lives the times when there's special discouragement. He knows the time when perhaps some friend has perhaps deserted us or has left the path so that we can't walk together. The Lord knows about those situations. And isn't it lovely here that just at this time when Lot is separated from him, the Lord appears to Abraham and encourages his heart? For the Bible tells us that God is the God of all encouragement. And so he comes here at this point to encourage the heart of Abram and says, as it were, Abram. I know if you look around you're going to be disappointed because you've lost lot and he was your companion. A body said look up, look up. He said lift up now thine eyes and he said look from the place where thou art, because you might say, well, I can't really look up to the Lord until there's been a change in some things in my life or something. Oh, isn't it very beautiful to see that the. From the place where thou art, in other words, right now. If there are any of us here who are discouraged or something has come to make you feel cast down and sad. Why look up and realize how richly you really have been blessed in Christ?

How richly Abraham had been blessed he was to look in every direction N SE and West, and as far as he could see everything belonged to him and to his seed after him. And how richly have we been blessed? Well, we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, and we have been, we have been blessed with the unsearchable. Of Christ and so Abram here at this point was encouraged by. How much was really to be his, and to his seed after him. And the Lord told him also that he would make his seat as the dust of the earth, and that is, he could count upon God to undertake for him and for his cause. Well, this must have been a real encouragement, and makes me think of the little hymn that says. In season the sustaining word Thou gives to our hearts to know. And very often, in some time when we feel specially cast down, the Lord. Bring something in His word to cheer our hearts. It tells us in the 16th Psalm the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places. Yeah, I have a goodly heritage and that Psalm is prophetic of the Lord Jesus and we couldn't say that his pathway in this world was a pleasant pathway as far as circumstances were concerned, because he was despised and rejected of man. Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. So why does it say the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places?

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 13:3-18: The Path of Obedience

Abram returned to the very place in Canaan where he had had his tent and his altar at the first. It would not do for him to stop at some other place, because the Lord had appeared to him there before, and undoubtedly that was where He wanted him to be. It is always best to be in the place where the Lord wants us. There Abram called on the name of the Lord. If we want to have confidence that He hears our prayers, it is necessary to walk in the path of obedience to Him.

A Quarrel Between Lot and Abram

Shortly after Abram and Lot had settled quietly in the land, a quarrel began between their herdsmen. They had become so rich when in Egypt that now they could not dwell together in Canaan. How easily riches can become a snare if we set our hearts upon them! God has a reason, too, in telling us that the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then in the land, for it is a sad thing when the world sees the children of God quarreling. Lot didn’t seem to feel badly about it, nor about the dishonor to the Lord’s name by such actions. Abram, on the other hand, was much concerned about it, and said to him, “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee ... for we be brethren.” He did not want to quarrel because Lot was his brother’s son, and he knew such things did not please the Lord.

Abram soon found the best way to settle it. He told Lot that he could take first choice of the land, and that he would take what was left. How kind this was! When you see a quarrel starting, dear children, do you give in to your friends as Abram did, and let them have first choice? This would surely please the Lord, and when we think of all He has done for us, and of how He forgave us when we deserved to be punished, we should forgive others too. “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

The Test of Lot’s Heart

Up to this time Lot had followed all Abram’s movements, but he had never really followed the Lord for himself. Now the test came. He must act for himself, and when he did, we soon discover where his heart was. He looked toward the well-watered plains of Sodom, and said they were like the land of Egypt. His heart was still in Egypt, and he was quite ready to pitch his tent toward the wicked city of Sodom.

This world in which we live is filled with wickedness and sin too. It has crucified the Son of God, and like Sodom, God’s righteous judgment is hanging over it. Those who know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour are safe from this judgment, and someday He will come and call His own to be with Him forever. Dear young reader, are you ready to meet Him?

After Lot departed, the Lord appeared to Abram, and promised to give him the land. He told him to walk through it, for He wanted him to see all that belonged to him. Abram then moved to the plain of Mamre.

The believer’s blessings now are spiritual ones, for we are “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). God wants us to read His Word so that we may know the many blessings which belong to us in Christ. Do you read it each day?

1. What was the best way to settle the dispute between Abram and Lot?

2. At some point we all have to live by our own faith and not coast along counting on someone else to make spiritual decisions for us. That moment of truth came for Rehoboam in his life. How did he respond?

3. An excellent pamphlet that teaches practical lessons from the life of Lot can be found in Lessons From the Lives of Abraham and Lot, Four Essential Things Missing in Lot’s Life by B. Anstey.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 12:11-13:2: Abram's Restoration

When Abram was about to enter Egypt, he told his wife to say that she was his sister. Why did he not want to tell that she was his wife? It was because he was afraid they would kill him if he acknowledged it. He had the fear of man instead of the fear of God before him. Egypt would not want him if he acknowledged his proper relationship to Sarai, nor will the world want the Christian who admits that he belongs to Christ, and speaks about Him and His love.

However God had His eye on Abram, and intervened to bring about his restoration. Very often when we go into the world, we bring trouble upon them as well as upon ourselves. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord, the Lord sent a terrible storm on the sea, and all the men in the ship with him were in trouble as well as Jonah. Here in our chapter, too, God plagued the house of Pharaoh for taking Abram’s wife. When you try to go on with the world, you only spoil their pleasure, and make yourself unhappy, too, because your conscience will condemn you. You will always be miserable in such a path, for the things of God cannot mix with the things of the world.

Dishonor to His Name

Finally Pharaoh found out that Abram had told him a lie and that Sarai was his wife. He called for him and rebuked him for it. It is a bad thing when the world has to rebuke us because we do not act like the children of God. It is very dishonoring to the Lord and must have been a humbling experience for Abram.

A young man once took his friend to a place of pleasure, where he knew he should not go as a Christian. When there, he began to speak to her about the way of salvation. She immediately turned to him and asked, “Are you a Christian?” “Yes” he replied. “Well” she said, “then what are you doing here?” When we confess Christ, we always find the right kind of company, but it is always best to confess His name first, instead of going places where we should not be as God’s children, thereby bringing dishonor on His name.

Back to Canaan

Abram soon found that his place was in Canaan, and he “went up out of Egypt.” Lot, too, came up with him, but he was apparently just following Abram and not walking in his own faith. Are you following other Christians, or are you following the Lord? Is He really the Object before your soul? Others may fail in the path as Abram did, but He never changes. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

There was no real progress of soul as long as Abram was in Egypt, though he became very rich “in cattle, in silver, and in gold.” Such things as these had not attracted his heart while in Canaan, for there he had his tent and his altar and, above all, the Lord’s presence and blessing. The Lord had not appeared to him while in Egypt. There are two kinds of riches spoken of in the Word of God. In Canaan, Abram was “rich in faith.” He had “the true riches” (Luke 16:11), and “he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). In Egypt, he had acquired what God calls “uncertain riches” (1 Timothy 6:17). Which of the two are you seeking? Only “the true riches” will abide; the other soon passes away.

1. Why did Pharaoh rebuke Abram?

2. What are some of the riches that Ephesians 1 describes which have been given to the Christian? What makes these “certain” riches? What makes what the world offers “uncertain” riches?

3. Though it’s a pretty long book, Unsearchable Riches by E. Dennett is well worth reading. It presents the Lord Jesus Christ in many of His different characters such as Saviour, Advocate and Example. You’ll get one long feast for your soul in meditating on the Person it presents.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 12:10: The Path of Obedience

After Abram had been in Canaan for a short time, God allowed a time of famine to come. The crops were poor, and there was very little food to eat, nor was there any pasture for his cattle. What was Abram to do? God had told him to come into that land, and had promised to bless him in it, and he must have wondered why God sent the famine. I suppose many questions came into his mind and troubled him. God was testing his faith.

Let us pause for a moment and apply this to our own lives. Many of our readers know the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour, and we rejoice in the knowledge that we are the children of God by simple faith in Him. Then someday trials and troubles come upon us. Satan whispers in our ears and says, “Why does God allow these things if He really loves you?” He tells us that the path of following the Lord is too hard, and that we should go after at least some of the pleasures of the world. Are we going to listen to his lies, or choose the path of obedience to the Lord?

Trials of Faith

These are trials of faith, and God allows them to test us. It is easy to go on with other Christians when everything runs smoothly, but when difficulties come, we need to approach the throne of grace for help from above. God has told us to expect suffering in this world, and we should count it a privilege when we think of what Christ has suffered for us. “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29).

Abram’s Bad Decision

Alas for poor Abram! He made a bad decision. He did not act in obedience to God, but chose His own path. He went down into Egypt. Egypt was the center of the world’s glory and wealth at that time. There wasn’t any famine there, and he thought he would have plenty of everything he wanted. The two things that were really most important he did not, and could not, have there.

He had to fit in with Egypt’s ways, and his tent and altar had no place in that land. Wealth and pleasure were of primary importance in Egypt, and Abram soon found himself doing the same things as the others around him. Yes, he was just like a man of the world, when he should have been a man of faith in Canaan.

Dear young reader, are you going after this poor world as if you were going to stay here forever? You would soon see the emptiness of it all if you caught a glimpse of the glory where Jesus dwells.

One day I was walking down the street, and watching the sun as it set in all its beauty in the western sky. After looking at it for a few moments, I turned to see something in a store window, but the glory of the setting sun had made everything look hazy and dim.

Now we want to tell you about “a light above the brightness of the sun” which we can look upon by faith. It is the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, and when we have this before our souls, it makes all the pleasures of this poor world look dim.

1. What two important things did Abram have to leave behind to go into Egypt?

2. What is it that makes what Satan offers to us in his world so exciting? What are some of the things that Solomon tried to see if they would bring happiness? You'll find many of them described in the book of Ecclesiastes.

3. The simple little leaflet Not of the World by J. N. Darby is full of quotes that would a be a real encouragement to anyone who reads and meditates on them.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 12:6-9: Travelers and Pilgrims

When Abram finally reached the land of Canaan, he found the Canaanites were in it. Yes, there were enemies who would like to have hindered him from possessing what God had promised him. We, too, will find many enemies in the path of faith, who will try to keep us from enjoying the blessings which belong to all those who know the Lord Jesus as their own personal Saviour.

Perhaps he might have felt a little discouraged when he found these Canaanites in the land, but just at that moment the Lord appeared and encouraged him with the words, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (verse 7). When you feel discouraged, dear young believer, just think of one of God's precious promises from His Word, and it will cheer your heart.

As soon as Abram had received this promise from the Lord, he built an altar to worship. Although we do not worship at altars made of stone today as Abram did, we know the Lord was pleased when Abram built this altar, because God was not fully known at that time. He had only partially revealed Himself, and it was not until the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world that God became fully known. All the glory of God shone out in the face of Jesus Christ (see 2 Corinthians 4:6). Now we do not need altars made of stone at which to worship God, for the Lord Jesus said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him" (John 4:23). We can now come right into His very presence by faith, and thank Him for all He has done for us, asking Him, too, for the things we need.

Bethel

After this Abram moved to another place near Bethel, where he pitched his tent and built an altar. Many of these names have meanings which are very interesting. Bethel means "the house of God." It is nice to be near the place of meeting where the Lord has placed His name. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst" (Matthew 18:20). Even boys and girls will find much blessing for their souls by coming regularly to the meetings.

Abram had his tent as well as his altar. I don't suppose any of you live in a tent, but perhaps you have slept in one when you were on a journey, or for a short time during the nice weather. Tents are not permanent dwelling places, being used mostly by travellers, and Abram was a traveller — a pilgrim. If you belong to the Lord Jesus, and can say you are redeemed by His precious blood, you are travellers too. Yes, we who are saved are on our way to the Glory Land, and we don't expect to stay in this poor, sad world very long. We don't want to build a mansion here, for we are soon going to leave it all behind when the Lord Jesus comes for His own.

On the east side of Abram's tent and altar was a place named Hai. The word Hai means "a heap," and that is just what this world and all its pleasures really are — only a heap of rubbish. It has no real or lasting happiness to offer you. Why not come to Christ? He longs to bless and save you, and then someday He will take you to His bright home above. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

1. What did Abram do as soon as he received the promise of Canaan from the Lord?

2. When a traveler packs his bags for a trip, what kinds of things are almost never important enough to take along? What are some of the things we would leave out of our lives if we truly realized we were on our way to heaven?

3. If you are meditating on how the Lord wants you to be a pilgrim you would find some help in the book Faithful Follower: Practical Meditations on the Life of Caleb by J. N. Hyland?

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 11:31-12:5: Instruction and Obedience

We now come to a very interesting story in God's blessed book. It is about Abram. God has told us a great deal about some people, whereas others are only mentioned by name. The Bible is not a history book, and there is always a divine purpose in everything God has been pleased to write down for us. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

Instructions for Abram's Journey

Abram was a man of faith. When we have faith in God, it simply means that we believe exactly what God has said, because He has said it. And faith always shows itself in works — otherwise it would be dead faith. The Lord appeared to Abram and told him to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and come into a land that He would show him. This was a hard thing for Abram to do, and the Lord knows just how difficult it is for you to take a stand for Him, too, dear boys and girls. Ask Him to help you and He will. We often sing together,

Abram's father, whose name was Terah, decided to go along with him for at least part of the way. One day they began their long journey. Traveling was very slow and difficult in those days. There were four of them in the company: Abram and his wife, his father Terah, and his nephew Lot. They intended to go all the way to Canaan, which was the place where the Lord wanted Abram to live. However while they were traveling along they came to a very nice place, named Haran, and they decided to live there. Perhaps Abram's father persuaded him that it was better than Canaan, for Abram seemed to forget that God had told him to go to the land HE would show him. God wanted him in Canaan, not Haran, no matter how much better it seemed in Haran.

Partial Obedience

Abram was only partially obedient, for although he left his own country, and his kindred, he did not leave his father's house, for his father was with him, nor did he come into the land which God was to show him. He stopped short of the path of full obedience to the Word of God. Dear boys and girls, are we not often like Abram, and choose our own path in some things? God could not bless Abram in Haran, and he had to bring a great sorrow into his life to make him realize his mistake. His father died there, and how keenly Abram must have felt it. Often sorrows come into our lives, too, but God allows them for our blessing if we take them from His hand. "For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men" (Lamentations 3:33).

The Lord used this trial in Abram's life to exercise him, and soon he gathered everything together and set out again for the Land of Canaan. This time he did not stop by the way however; he continued on his journey until he arrived in Canaan. The Word of God, and His promises of blessing were before his soul and cheered him in the path. We, too, have "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4), which encourage our hearts as we pass through this dark scene on our way to Glory.

1. What did the Lord tell Abram to do when He appeared to him?

2. Why is Abraham called the "father" of faith? What would it be like to travel to a strange country that you had never seen pictures of, had no place to live in, and no job waiting for you when you arrived?

3. You might enjoy reading the simple and faith-stirring account of Abraham's life found in the book Abraham: The Friend of God by H. Smith.

God Introduces His Ways: Bible Talks On Genesis, Genesis 11:1-30: Man's Pride Confounded

Before going on with the eleventh chapter, we will just notice a couple of things in the tenth. The names given in it are of great interest to those who study the Word of God, for they tell us where the families of Noah's sons settled after the flood. This gives us the key to some very important prophecies in other parts of the Bible, for it is all linked together according to the perfect wisdom of God. The Jews are the descendants of Shem, the Gentiles of Japheth, and Egyptians and other African peoples are from Ham.

The Tower of Babel

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1). Think of how nice it would be if everyone still spoke the same language! It would save so much trouble, and even war, if they did, but every blessing which depended on man's faithfulness has been lost. Man's course has always been one of departure from God, thus bringing God's judgment upon him. The blessings we enjoy in the world today are the result of God's patient grace to His creature, for we deserve His righteous judgment.

These men in their pride decided to build a tower whose top would reach to heaven, perhaps thinking they could take shelter in it if there were another flood, although God had promised there would not be another one. However they started to build. Their tower must have looked very grand, and the bricks were well baked. It was getting higher each day! But what kind of mortar were they using? It was slime, which was really a black asphalt. This would remind us of our black, sinful hearts which the Bible says are, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). The whole building was held together by the "black mortar" of sinful man and his efforts, and was doomed to failure. All men's plans to reach heaven, or to escape judgment by their own works, are useless. God's salvation is by grace, and not of works (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

God's Building

In contrast to this tower that the children of men were building, we are told in 1 Peter 2 about a building that God is making. It is composed of all true believers, who are "living stones" in this wonderful structure. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only foundation, and the Corner Stone, and when any boy or girl accepts Him as his or her Saviour, God builds them as "living stones" into His building. All who are part of this building will surely reach heaven and spend eternity there with the Lord Jesus. Dear reader, do not try to get there by your own efforts, for you cannot. Accept the Lord Jesus as your Saviour today.

God came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men were building. Remember, boys and girls, that God knows all about your plans too, and the motive behind every action. Are you leaving Him out of your life, or do you try to please Him day by day? These men were trying to work out their own plans without any thought of God, but they came to a sad end. God made them all speak different languages, and they could not understand one another; they left their building, and were scattered over the face of the earth. In spite of it all, God is still working in grace, and is saving the souls of men and women "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

1. What does the black mortar used to build the tower represent to us?

2. Why does God use a symbol like "living stones" to describe Christians who are currently being added to His house? How do stones get shaped by the master builder?

3. There's a wonderful and simple meditation entitled The Tower of Babel—Genesis 11 found in God's Wonderful Stories: Volume 2 by Grandma Smith.

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