

Glorious Gospel Publication



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GRACE



OUR ABIDING PLACE OUR ENDLESS SONG OF PRAISE A MESSAGE OF GRACE AND GLORY

“...the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:10,11

These verses give us a fitting introduction to Psalm eighty-four, where we find a precious outline with three divisions concerning God’s grace.

LONGINGS FOR GRACE

Verses 1-4

In the first two verses, we see the longing in the hearts of true believers for the establishment of grace, as an abiding place and a dwelling of peace and rest. This is the desire of the wholehearted believer, so that he may become established in the doctrine of the Lord. He will not then be as a child, tossed about by every wind of men’s doctrines.

In the third verse we see that what the nest and house are to the birds, God through grace becomes to the believer.

“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.” (V. 4) This is the key verse to this first division. The one who dwells in the shelter of God’s grace will always have a song of praise and victory. We will notice that in each division blessing is promised upon the ones who seek the Lord and depend upon His grace.

PROGRESS IN GRACE

Verses 5-8

The key verse in this section is verse 7, “They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.” Blessing comes upon the one who strengthens himself in the Lord. Paul wrote to Timothy, “...be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 2:1) This is where Paul found his strength. He learned that God’s grace was all sufficient. Through all of his trials and afflictions, the apostle could testify that surely God’s words to him were true: “...he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...” (2 Cor. 12:9)

This is progressing or growing in grace, and it is the only way that we can become established in the Truth. Read 2 Peter 3:17,18 and Heb. 13:8,9. While we are experiencing the workings of grace, we may experience the truth of verse six - “Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.” “Baca” means ‘weeping’ and thus we see that the place of weeping can be turned into a place of blessing and refreshing. As we take all things from God’s hands, we go on from strength to strength. You will note also that such overcomers PASS THROUGH this valley. They do not remain there forever.

RESULTS OR CULMINATION OF GRACE

Verses 9-12

The key verse in this portion is verse 11, “For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” First of all, we note that the Lord is our *Light*. In the beginning, God commanded the light to shine upon the earth. Just so, He also commands the *Light* to shine into our hearts, that the eyes of our understanding will be *enlightened*. It is only through revelation that the grace of God is understood. In the

New Jerusalem, there will be no need of the *sun*, for the Lord God and His Son will be the *light* there. There will also be *illuminated* believers to add their *light* to that of God.

The Lord is also a *Shield*. This is protection under grace. God manifested His grace to Abraham by saying, "...I am thy *shield*, and thy exceeding great reward." (Gen. 15:1) We read in Psalm 91:1 "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall *abide under the shadow* of the Almighty." The one who seeks that hiding place need not fear terror by night, nor pestilence, nor enemy. He also promises that He will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13) He also promises the overcomers that He will *keep them* from the hour of tribulation that is coming upon the earth - Revelation 3:10.

No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly - Verse 11. As we grow in grace, we find that we are *able* to walk uprightly. His grace alone is our boast of an upright walk. Then we find that "no good thing" will be withheld from the one who trusts in the Lord. This includes the wonderful promise of being glorified with Christ. We find God's purpose in Eph. 1:4-7 concerning us. It is His desire that we share Christ's glory. The perfection and glorification of the saints is to the praise of *the glory of His grace*, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved: In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to *the riches of His grace*.

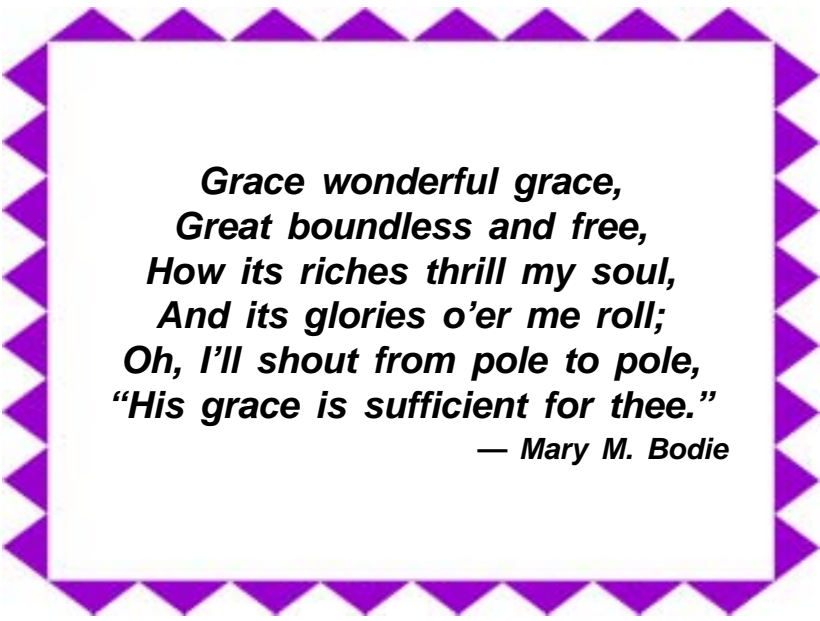
Not only will believers receive "*glory*," but God will also be glorified in His people. He is glorified when we appropriate His grace, and then we in turn will be glorified with Him. Consider 2 Thess. 1:10-12. Now the measure of His grace that we lay hold of here will determine how much *glory* we will share with Christ eternally.

The last promised blessing is this Psalm is found in verse twelve - "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that

trusteth in thee.” This tells us how to appropriate the grace of God. It is by trusting in the Lord or by faith. The only way we can enter into His grace is through faith. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God - Romans 5:1,2.

We rejoice, even now, in the hope of the glory of God. If God’s grace has not done anything for you, then you have no right to rejoice. If, however, you have received God’s grace in any measure, absolutely nothing should be able to keep you from praising Him with your whole heart. After God’s grace has performed its ULTIMATE PURPOSE, and the overcoming saints have reached their ULTIMATE GOAL, they will still be praising God. It will be a continuation of their earthly occupation. As verse four says, “Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.” Glory to God!

J. D.



***Grace wonderful grace,
Great boundless and free,
How its riches thrill my soul,
And its glories o’er me roll;
Oh, I’ll shout from pole to pole,
“His grace is sufficient for thee.”***

— Mary M. Bodie

LAST DAYS

Anita Clark



**“O Daniel, shut up the words , and seal the book,
even to the time of the end: many shall run to and
fro, knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4.**

We may all be aware that since the early 1900's in the last hundred years, knowledge has greatly increased. We are living in what the world calls the information age. Knowledge is exploding in all directions. An Internet article says, “It is said that 80% of the world's total knowledge has been brought forth in the last decade and that 90% of all scientists who have ever lived are alive today.” The Associated Press says, “People in the U.S. know more than they did about basic science today than they did two decades ago.”

My aged mother as a young child heard native Americans beating their tom-toms, in the pasture near her rural home. Horses and mules were used almost altogether for travel and raising crops. . It is amazing how much civilization has progressed since that time. However, though natural knowledge has increased, we see a greater and steady going away from the knowledge of God. Romans 1:28 says of fallen man, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”

Our text Daniel 12:4 is speaking more of spiritual knowledge than natural knowledge for although natural knowledge has increased at a staggering rate, and is a great sign of the nearness of the Lord's return, God, since the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, has effectually increased our understanding of the Word. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come and lead us into the truth, and give us understanding of things to come. The prophecy of Daniel, although it was a closed book,

is opened up to our understanding now, which indicates to us that we are living in the end time. God said to Daniel, “Seal the book, even to the time of the end..”

GLOBALIZATION IS HERE AND BECOMING STRONGER – The unity of the world in the end time is prophesied. We hear more talk about “globalization,” than ever before. The leaders of the world feel that only through unification can war be conquered.

The Middle East Times article states, “This past week there were four almost simultaneous events pointing to the emergence of something that is starting to look like a new U.S.-led security system that reaches from Europe to the Indian Ocean.”

As far back as 2005, there have been talks between the U.S. and India. China who is now emerging as the nation most likely to go ahead of the U.S. is becoming the number one superpower in every significant respect. This concern has caused this drive by the U.S. to bond with India. Since 2005 steps have been taken to forge ahead with this relationship. India has 600 million people in the working age group, and is ahead of China in intellectual capital, scientific and technological and managerial Manpower.

The first of the four almost simultaneous events is the U.S. is forging ahead with a nuclear cooperation agreement with India. Because of this the 45 - nation Nuclear Suppliers Group, met this past week to discuss this agreement. The Atomic Agency has already agreed, and it is felt that the U.S. Congress is likely to agree.

The second significant event this past week is that U.S. Secretary of State Congoleeza Rice during a trip to Baghdad, made an agreement about the status of U.S. troops, establishing that even though the goal is to bring home almost all the troops home by June, 2009, a U.S. presence in the world’s richest

energy region, will continue for the foreseeable future. Possibly until 2011.

The third event was Secretary Rice's signing an agreement with Poland concerning the basing of U.S. anti-missile missiles in Poland. Russia is threatening to target these new missiles, and warned Poland that agreeing to the deal exposed it "100% to Russian nuclear missiles." The site of the base is located just 150 miles away from the Polish - Russian border.

The fourth event was an extraordinary NATO ministerial summit, where it was declared that Georgia would not be abandoned, even though the parties did not agree to do very much. Chancellor Merkel of Germany said, "Georgia will become a member of NATO if it wants to."

The missiles in Poland and the allowance of Georgia to enter NATO are both thorns in the side of Russia. The cold war seemed to be over, but Russia through its action of invading Georgia, may well change the climate again. The EU Observer states, "Moscow's relations with NATO were left in tatters after the Kremlin dismissed the results of an emergency meeting on Russian actions in Georgia as 'empty' words." Russia says it plans to halt all military cooperation with NATO.

Several years ago, a Bible scholar said, "We better take advantage of this thawing of the cold war with Russia, and get into the former Soviet Union Countries, and preach the Gospel to those poor souls who are in darkness because the door may swing shut without warning at any time." That time may be coming soon. We should pray for the Christians in Russia, who may find it much more difficult in the days ahead. We can see God's plan coming to pass. As we have said often, at the first part of the tribulation, there will be peace (white horse rider of Rev.6), but soon will come war. Ezekiel 38 & 39 tell of this end time scenario, where Russia (Gog & Magog) will unite with Persia (Iran) and Libya, and other nations to fight against Israel. Recently, the leader of Libya said they stood behind

Russia concerning Russia's invasion of Georgia. Once again, we will be raptured if we are watching and waiting for the Lord's return before the white horse rider comes forward. Praise the Lord! Events in this world speak to us of how soon that time actually is.

Assad of Syria just made a trip to Russia to request to buy an array of military equipment including long range anti-aircraft missiles and MIG-31 fighter jets. Defense Minister Barak of Israel says, "Russia and Israel have no crisis relations between Jerusalem and Moscow, but we fear that Assad is trying to drag Russia and Israel into new diplomatic crisis by emphasizing Israel's arms sales to Georgia."

WAR WITH IRAN MAY BE SOON – It seems very likely that Israel and Iran may go to war in the next few months. Israel is buying 90 new long range F-161 fighter jets from the U.S. and two new submarines from Germany to add to the three that it already has. The U. S., meantime, is sending two additional carrier battle groups to the Persian Gulf region and is warning Iran that its patience is wearing thin.

According to Tom Doyle, writer of a book called, "TWO NATIONS UNDER GOD," in 1979 there were an estimated 500 believers in Iran. Today there are 1-2 million believers in Jesus in Iran. All of them have to meet secretly in homes. A new law has been passed in Iran to allow the genocide of anyone who has turned to any other faith except Islam. Despite this God is wooing people to salvation through Jesus Christ. Isn't it wonderful what God can do? Much more than we ask or think. Praise the Lord! We should be praying for Christians around the world. Many suffer for the Lord so greatly. In Iran some key leaders have been martyred for their faith. I never hear these things except I wonder and ask myself, "Would I be faithful under such circumstances?" Jesus is coming so very soon. Let us look up and walk circumspectly as the Scripture admonishes.

Five Qualities of a Worthy Walk (Eph. 4:2)

Debra Isenbletter

Vs 2: “*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*” In this verse we see **Five Qualities of a Worthy Walk**. In verse 1 we are told to “walk worthy of the Lord” and in this verse that worthy walk is described. Five wonderful qualities or characteristics are made visible by that walk: 1) Lowliness; 2) Meekness; 3) Longsuffering; 4) Forbearing; and 5) Love. All of these qualities are seen in Christ, a wonderful description of His character and through the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23), they are a description of His life in us, His nature, the New Creation life. In the Fruit of the Spirit we see “love; longsuffering and meekness” mentioned and in one of the meanings for “longsuffering” is “forbearance” and in one of the meanings for “meekness” “lowliness” is seen. So all five of these traits are found in the Fruit of the Spirit. Notice how this verse begins, it is “With all ...” That word “all” means that we are to hold nothing back, it is not just a little bit of lowliness, just enough to get by, but it is a full measure. We are to show the full measure in *all* five. Then the unity mentioned in verse 3 is made possible.

Lowliness: Means “humility, humbleness (of mind), having a humble opinion of one’s self.” Lowliness stands in direct opposition to pride. How many today have “a humble opinion” of themselves? It was Satan’s pride, his lack of “lowliness” or humility that brought about his downfall. Lowliness is an attitude of the heart, it begins there, just as pride does. “For thou hast said **in thine heart**, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God ...” (Is 14:13-14). Satan

began his boast with “I will” when he saw only his beauty and forgot who gave him that beauty. (Ezek 28:13-17). He was created, yet He forgot His creator. God saw Satan’s heart lifted up and that pride destroyed his beauty.

Lowliness is an essential part of the character of Christ. Where Satan *rebelled*, Christ *obeyed*. The “lowliness” of Christ is seen in His subjection to His Father’s Will, when He set aside His own will. “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (Jn 4:34); “For I came...not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me” (Jn 6:38); and Jesus words in the garden were “nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.” (Lk 22:42). What a precious picture of lowliness. What does Paul say concerning this attitude, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...who made himself of no reputation...he humbled himself and became obedient unto death...” (Phil 2:5-8).

Lowliness is also an essential part of the character of the New Creation; we set “self” aside. We are to have lowliness of *mind*. This stands in contrast to a fleshly mind, which destroys the unity of the body of Christ. What a wonderful example Paul was, who served the Lord Jesus Christ with “all humility of mind. When saints set others before themselves, they show this lowliness of mind. False teachers manifested a false humility in contrast to lowliness and Paul says those that did this had a “fleshly mind” (Col 2:18). We are to put on this “humbleness of mind” (Col 3:12), this testimony of Christ and in doing so we strengthen our fellowship with him and with other saints.

Meekness: Meekness is “mildness, softness, gentleness”. Meekness is “a spirit that never takes offense.” (H.A. Ironside). Like lowliness, it is also an attitude and also a part of the character of Christ. It is seen in how Jesus responded or did not respond to the things that were said to Him. His answers reflected His meekness even in His rebukes. Meekness is seen

in **His attitude of submission as a servant** (Phil 2:7-8) “*he took upon him the form of a servant*”. What does that mean? He took upon him not only the physical form but a servant’s attitude. Meekness was **the yoke He wore**, it is the instrument God uses so we may learn, it is a teaching tool. (Mt 11:29) “*Take my yoke [meekness] upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart...*” Meekness is seen in how **He rode into Jerusalem as their King**. (Mt 21:5) “*Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass.*”

Meekness is also a part of the character of the New Creation, through it we show forth Christ. We are called to follow Christ’s example in all things, we learn to suffer with meekness. (1 Pet 2:20-21) “when ye...suffer...ye take it patiently...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example ...” Isn’t it interesting that it takes adversity to bring out these qualities and traits. Meekness is seen in the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23). It is seen in how we receive the Word. (James 1:21) “*Wherefore...receive with meekness [in humble, gentle, modest spirit] the engrafted word...*” It is seen in our works (James 3:13) “let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” or “show forth his good works with unobtrusive humility.” It is seen in our attitude before God and men. (1 Pet 3:4) “*But let it be...the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*” It is seen in our speech. (1 Pet 3:15) “*be ready always to give an answer...with meekness and fear [respect, respectfully].*” What about our attitude toward each other? Meekness is seen there also. It is how we restore another saint and bear another’s burden. (Gal 6:1) “*Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness...*” It is how we instruct others. (2 Ti 2:25) “*In meekness [courtesy and gentleness] instructing those that oppose themselves.*” And finally, it is our testimony before all men, saints and sinners. (Tit 3:2) “*To speak evil of no man*

...but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.” So we see that our Fruit; our receiving the Word; our Works; our Attitude; our Speech; our Attitude to one another all should reflect meekness and in doing so will show forth that worthy walk. We are to follow after or pursue after meekness, embrace it when the opportunity presents itself. We can choose to “follow after meekness” (1 Ti 6:11) or we can choose not to.

Longsuffering: Longsuffering is “patience, forbearance (especially in bearing troubles and ills) and (slowness in avenging wrongs). [Ironsides]: “Longsuffering is a favorite word of Paul and it is used twice by Peter. It is found 12 times in the New Testament. It means literally, “to endure with unruffled temper.” ‘I would not mind if what she said about me had been true, but when I know it isn’t true, I can’t stand it.’ Therefore, the need of longsuffering.” [Wuest]: “Longsuffering is patience with respect to persons and patience in respect to circumstances. The man who is longsuffering, is he who, having to deal with injurious persons, does not suffer himself easily to be provoked by them or to blaze up in anger. The man who is patient is one who under a great siege of trials bears up and does not lose courage.”

Longsuffering is an essential part of the character of Christ, it is how He deals with us. God’s longsuffering is seen in His patience with man’s rebellion. (1 Pet 3:20) “*Which sometime were disobedient, when once the **longsuffering** of God waited in the days of Noah...*” His longsuffering is seen in how it leads us to repentance. (Ro 2:4) “*Or despises thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and **longsuffering**; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*” His longsuffering is seen in His slowness in showing wrath to those deserving of judgment (Ro 9:22) and is seen as He patiently waits for sinners to repent (2 Pet 3:9). Christ’s longsuffering is seen in how He dealt with the Jews who rejected Him and with

the church's greatest persecutor (Saul). Paul never forgot this longsuffering! (1 Ti 1:16) "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy...that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all **longsuffering**, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe.*" In all things Christ is our pattern!

Longsuffering is an essential part of the character of the New Creation, it is how we deal with each other. Longsuffering is part of walking worthy of the Lord, like all the above traits. (Col 1:10-11) "*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all patience and **longsuffering**...*"

Forbearing: Forbearing comes from a word meaning "to hold up" hence "to hold oneself erect and firm;" "to bear (with calmness)" or "to endure (a person's opinions or actions)." Forbearing is putting up with uncomfortable circumstances or people, another aspect of enduring what we cannot change, knowing that only the Lord is able to change those circumstances or those people. Forbearing can be seen in the Serenity Prayer (by Reinhold Niebuhr): *God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.* The full original version is as follows: *God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things which should be changed, and the Wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.*

Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time, Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace, Taking, as Jesus did, This sinful world as it is, Not as I would have it, Trusting that You will make all things right, If I surrender to Your will, So that I may be reasonably happy in this life, And supremely happy with You forever in the next.

Just like the previous characteristics forbearing is **an essential part of the character of Christ, this is how He deals with us.**

During His ministry, Jesus was willing “to bear with” (forbear) a faithless generation. (Mk 9:14-24) “*He saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer [bear with] you?*” During His crucifixion Jesus was willing to “endure” (forebear in love) man’s rejection. (1 Pet 2:23) “*Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again...*” Jesus “held Himself erect and firm” in his obedience to God’s Will. And what was God’s Will for Jesus? It was that Jesus “bear (with calmness)” or “endure” the weight of God’s judgment and the weight of our sins. And why did Jesus “forbear” or “bear with calmness and endure” this? Because of His love for us! “forbearing...in love.” Jesus, our High Priest “bears with” our stumbling and failures for He knows our frailty when we come to the throne of grace and obtain mercy (Heb 4:15-16). Jesus forbearance and love is made visible each time He listens to our requests, our petitions and our confessions, for “*he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ...*” (1 Jn 1:9).

Forbearing is also **an essential part of the character of the New Creation**, and **this is how we deal with each other**. During this time while we wait for our Lord’s return, we “forebear,” “endure” with patience and faith persecutions and tribulations. Paul commended the Thessalonians when he said “We ourselves glory in you...for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.”

Love: This love is “agape” love, love of self-sacrifice, the love of God as seen through Christ Jesus. W.J. Franklin wrote: “*Note that the **attitude of submissiveness** seen in this verse is not because we are in a position where we can’t help ourselves, but is to be done voluntarily and in love.*” How precious that all these attitudes and characteristics flow from “love,” not from duty or obligation, and what a wonderful thought that all add up to an “attitude of submissiveness.” But behind this attitude is the enabling power and motive for this

worthy walk, the enabling power is love. It is not just any love, not self-love but self-sacrificing love. Love is not one dimensional, it has many sides and many face or facets (like a diamond). It is seen working behind the scenes in our attitudes and actions both in the church and in the world.

We see this first made visible in Christ and in God and then in us through the life of Christ. What was God's motive for sending Christ? It was love. "For God so loved the world..." (Jn 3:16). What was Christ's motive for dying for us? It was the same love. What did Jesus ask Peter in John 21? "*lovest thou me?*" What should our answer be and how can we best show this love? Our answer should be yes and we can best show this love in the way we walk – by walking "worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called."

When Paul wrote about the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians, in-between chapters 12 and 14 he put chapter 13. In this chapter he not only describes love, but shows the controlling and restraining power of love as it is used to guide and direct the use of gifts. It isn't just a love chapter but it is also love in relation to the gifts and how we react when we see them in use or use them. What a wonderful portion of the word, the NIV translates as: "*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*" We **bear with one another in love** in so many ways and we need to for we are like a family and as with any family, siblings will have conflicts and spats and irritate or aggravate one another. When this happens Paul says, "forbearing one another in love." This is essential for a healthy assembly and essential to the unity of an assembly.

Was this type of love seen in Paul's life as he dealt with saints and assemblies? Yes it was. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning the problems in their meeting and the corrections and admonitions he needed to present to them, he did so with this type of love. (2 Cor 2:4): *"For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."* Paul's motive was love and there was a "forbearing with them" that went along with the disciplining of them. What a wonderful balance. Paul told the Galatians that it was not a **work of the flesh** (circumcision) but a **work of faith** motivated by love that matters. (Gal 5:6): *"faith which worketh by love."*

The motive for Paul's instruction and teaching of the saints was love and it was *"love out of a pure heart"* (1 Ti 1:5). The triple testimony of the Thessalonians included this love that enabled them to both serve and submit. It was the *"work of faith"* and *"labor of love"* and *"patience of hope"* that Paul remembered. (1 Thess 1:3). It is because of love and through love that we are able to labor and truly minister to others. Paul wrote the Hebrews that the Lord would not forget their *"labor of love"* in how they ministered to the saints. (Heb 6:10) Paul used Philemon's love for the saints and for the Lord to encourage him to receive in love a disobedient servant. There he was *"forbearing in love."* (Philemon 5-16). And finally, this love is a visible manifestation of God's love seen in how we meet the needs of the brethren. When we see a brother with a need and show compassion, we are showing the love of God and when we do not, John asked *"how dwelleth the love of God in him?"* (1 Jn 3:17-18)

What a wonderful verse to show a worthy walk. Lowliness and meekness; longsuffering and forbearing and then love which unites and motivates

Beloved, let us love. . .

Part 7

1 John 4:7

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”

At this juncture, let us be reminded of our immense newness.

In this we understand that we are not merely new versions of an old model as many Christians are deceived into thinking (though nothing could be further from the truth), but we are absolutely new in origin, new in function, new in purpose and new in destiny even though for a brief time, it will outwardly appear that we remain the same old being. We are “born of the Spirit” (John 3:8) through faith in Christ, that Spirit being the Spirit of the Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth. We are spiritual beings that have, provisionally, already passed through and been recovered from the seemingly insurmountable power of sin and death, even those who have been resurrected from the dead (Romans 6:3-11). We are those who, via faith, understand that the “worlds were framed” (designed, created, and purposed) by the Word of God, and that the planet upon which we dwell has been created and then renovated at least twice, and it is yet scheduled for another make-over in the not too distant future. The creation that surrounds us, and the creation we are, is not like a fine painting that remains beautiful but static. We live in a dynamic universe and we are dynamic beings (both in natural and spiritual aspects). We are new and renewed by One who creates and re-creates anew.

At this juncture, let us be reminded that the God that has made us so is motivated by the purest, most holy love.

Hidden behind the veil of the immensity of the universe is the ever greater Creator who loves. We understand this love best when we understand the role the Creator fulfilled in providing redemption for mankind from the death which was birthed from wanton rebellion against His greatness. Again, we employ the words of the apostle Paul in II Corinthians 5:14-21, *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

And at this juncture we would be well served to remember our earlier example of the photograph of Earth rising over the horizon of the Moon. An amazing look at ourselves from an other-worldly perspective that can serve to remind us that we are to look upon our new lives in Christ from the vantage point

of our eternal-in-nature present and future. But, not only are we to look at ourselves from this perspective, we are to absolutely interact with one another (Christians) in this manner as well, and this is the focal point of our subject text. We cannot understand our existence without having an understanding of the love of God, even as we cannot understand ourselves without having some knowledge of the mannerisms of the love of God. All the more, we cannot know how to function as a member of the body of Christ, and relate to its parts and methods of interaction but by the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. We may be new creatures in Christ, but we are often wearied by the frustrations caused by the ongoing functions of that nature into which we were first born. And if that were not aggravating enough, we are placed in a position by our Lord where we must learn to interact with one another in a Christ-like manner in order to fully do His will. “Simon . . . feed my sheep.” Nurture them; coddle them; clean up after them; think for them; provide for them; encourage them; educate them; sacrifice for them; have your life dominated by their needs; keep track of them; find them when they are lost; find them again when they have strayed; pray for them; labor day and night for their wellbeing; endure their ignorance; enlighten their understanding; shepherd them through the seasons of your life and theirs; conduct your life so as to be an example and testimony for them; love the Lord your Savior and God by loving those He loves.

As Paul confesses in II Corinthians 12:15, *“And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you;”*.

“Beloved, let us love one another:” is not written to be like a greeting card pleasantry, but, quite the opposite, it a concise phrase containing monumental spiritual importance. Herein we find the heart of God’s purpose toward us. It is to be those that

receive and embrace His love, those that are transformed by His love, and those who will become dynamic spiritual creatures that will enter that everlasting moving of the love of God that reaches out to them who are by first nature contrary to His will, and of His fold by second birth. Galatians 5:13-14 reads, *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”* We find great reason for rejoicing as we contemplate of fact of eternal life in unspeakable glory, but such a great liberation does not, in the spirit of God’s abundant love and grace, grant us license to leave a path of destruction in our wake as we enjoy our newly received hope. The liberation of an individual from prison after he has received an unexpected, undeserved pardon does not permit him to commit crimes against the individual who granted the pardon or the society in which he celebrates. He should grant liberty even as he received it. He should allow life even as it was restored to him. If he was an unwilling captive of his own misdeeds, how much more should he endear himself to the one who freed him and labor with his liberator to rescue others who bend low under the same bondage through which he struggled? Love provides rescue and wisdom’s light.

To be freed from a sorrowful bondage is a wondrous blessing to experience. But to turn from this new found freedom and willingly subject oneself in love to another yoke for the sake of pleasing the liberator is counter-intuitive to the flesh. The nature of the flesh (that which is old) is to seek self and immediate satisfaction first and above all. The nature of the new, which is of the Spirit, is to mimic the love of the Father who so loved the world that He gave His Son. The battlefield that lies between these two opposing desires becomes the story

of a Christian's life. Romans 12:1-2 reads, *"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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Our newness compels us to give credence to our origin. The love that bought us compels us to search out the nature and nurture of that origin to discover the great love that has known us so very, very long.

The perspective gained as we acquire a more mature understanding of what life in Christ truly means is the dynamic force that drives us onward, and upward, and Godward. And it does not cause us to seek to travel alone nor trouble others as they pursue the same calling. It inspires us to reach out to help and to love, even as we have been helped and loved. For we no longer see only the flesh of another, but we see a lamb of the Lamb of God.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women's Retreat: October 10-12, Sand Lake, Michigan. The location - Lincoln Lake Baptist Youth Camp, MI. The theme: "Come & Dine" - speaker: Muriel Fields. For further information call or e-mail Beth Lenau: 616-217-7752 bethlen2@mail.com

Camp Joy Haven: The Lord willing this next summer camp will be the first week in June, 2009. The contract has been signed for that date. That is if we are still here, as the Lord may appear any time for us.

The Book of Daniel



Chapter 7:11-28

We read about a heavenly scene (Vs. 9 & 10) that Daniel saw in vision. Now we read of a change with verse 11 a earthly scene, "I beheld then...".

V. 11 - As Daniel beheld, he hears the voice of the horn (it is the little horn of V. 8 that plucked up 3 of the 10 horns). Remember the little horn represents the Antichrist. There are 2 phases of the Antichrist coming. We read of this also in the book of Revelation. V. 8, speaks of the first phase of his coming. He will not come at first as a world dictator, but as a man, speaking great things -V. 8. But notice in V. 11, the horn has become a beast, he is identified as the beast. Again reference is made to the great words he speaks. No doubt he will be a great orator and this is how he will come to prominence instead of skill in battle or strength. He will speak great words of peace and of bringing nations together - Rev. 13:5. Then he will change and say 'I want all this to myself, I want to rule the world' and so he will for a short period, but then will come his end - Rev. 19:20. Yes, his body will be destroyed, but his soul shall be in torment in the lake of fire for ever - Rev. 20:10.

V. 12 - They no longer rule. The beast is clearly distinguished from the other beasts here, which proves his unique place.

Vs. 13-14 - This agrees with Revelation 4 & 5 where we read of Christ as the Creator, crowned with glory and honor - Rev. 4:11; and as the redeemer - Rev. 5: 9-10. The *Ancient of days* is Christ viewed as God Almighty. It was as the *Son of man*

that He became our Redeemer. In Rev. 5:6 He is seen as a little lamb as it had been slain yet standing - Rev. 5:6. It is because of His redemptive work that dominion and glory and a kingdom that is of all people, nations and languages will be given to Him and His dominion is everlasting. His kingdom shall not pass away nor be destroyed. Do you believe it? It shall come to pass, it is God's word.

Vs. 15-16 - Daniel was grieved and troubled, but he knew what to do. He sought to know God's word and so should we. Did God give him the revelation of it? Oh, YES. So will He open up our understanding when we seek Him. A ministering angel made Daniel to know.

Vs 17-18 - Earthly dominion will be transferred from beasts to saints. Gentile times will be over and Israel will come into her place of supremacy and the Lord Himself on the throne as their King. Praise God!

Daniel was deeply impressed with the new-comer among the horns. For he is no ordinary horn, though simular.

Vs. 19-27 - The one that comes up in the time of the 10 horns, the Antichrist, he will speak cunningly until he gets his prey under him and then he will pounce on them as a beast on his prey. We learn more about this in the book of Revelation. Perhaps we will study it again as it is surely timely.

The Antichrist will turn on Israel after he gets them to sign a peace treaty. He will prevail against them, but this war on the saints is limited. It only continues until the Ancient of days makes His appearance. Then the saints (speaking of the remnant of Israel) will prevail against their former prevailer. Judgment will be given to the saints of the Most High (V. 22).

V. 28 - Daniel was troubled because according to God's decree, the end has come for the forth beast (the Roman Empire) and yet the rising kingdom of which the little horn is the chief actor, will be *as a fifth world empire*. This sorely troubles Daniel because of his people's (the Jews) sufferings. It touches him, yet he kept the matter in his heart.

It is unmistakably clear and plain from the answer to Daniel that God only recognizes 4 Gentile world empires, because the one that *appears to be the fifth world empire* is a counterfeit empire of Christ's Kingdom.

Closing comments: The forth beast or the last of these powers (the Roman Empire) - its first stage, its rise and development is outlined in V. 23. Its dissolution lies between V. 23 & 24. When we read of the 10 horns on the beast, that is the beginning of the end state -V. 24. The first stage was beastly and blood-thirsty in the sight of God, yet it was in divine order, but the second stage will be set up in defiance of God. When the hour of God's clock shall strike, the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled and He will place His Son (the Seed of Abraham & the Seed of David) upon His throne in the heavens, but the nations will rebel. Ps. 2 is a prophecy of this. God will laugh at their puny efforts to prevent His plans and purposes. God shall have them in derision (He shall scoff at them). He shall crown His King, His Son, Christ. They may launch their counterfeit empire and it will be in rebellion against God's decree as to His Son's right to reign.

Daniel 7:25 gives a brief description of the second stage of the Antichrist's career. The kingdom which will arise with 10 kings in coalition is then seen as one king. The little horn, the terrible man of destiny is in control of the world, the devil gives him his place as god of this world - II Thes. 2:9. His great words are defiance especially against Christ who is spoken of

here as the Most High. He is Israel's Messiah who will be on His throne at the time figured and the remnant of Israel are the saints that are to share the earthly kingdom. The Gentile beast will vent his ire upon Israel. He will wear them out and attempt to change their times, their feasts and their laws. He desires despotic (tyrant) authority over all men, over their consciences, religious and otherwise. He will have it a short time, "a time and times and the dividing of time" - 3 1/2 years. Why will God allow him this time? As judgment upon men for their rebellion against Him and His King. This will be a very heavy burden on all the world, but especially the Jewish people will suffer unparalleled tribulation as their chastisement.

But out of Israel a remnant will be saved to suffer no more forever. Great tribulation (Mt. 24:21) the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7) must be shortened Jesus said or no flesh should be saved (Mt. 24:22). The "destroyer" of Israel would wipe them off the face of the earth, but God will not allow that. They will cry to the living God for help and their Messiah, Jesus, will arrive for their deliverance and the Antichrist's destruction - Vs. 26-27. After the remnant of Israel receive their Messiah, He will bring them into the Kingdom promised to them in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He will place them forever in power on the earth and He will reign over all the kingdoms of the world "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords" for ever - I Tim. 6:15.

E. J. D.



*Yes, Israel Jehovah helped:
His word to Abraham cannot be broken.
In boundless mercy, He came forth,
A covenant to all his seed was spoken,
And holy is His name, And worthy is His fame.*