

Glorious Gospel Publication



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“GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY”



*“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you **good tidings of great joy**, which shall be to all people.”* Luke 2:8-10

The Gospel, God’s good news to us concerning His Son, is sent *“to all people.”* It is interestingly noticeable here and throughout the Scripture, the varied reactions of humanity toward His glad tidings. The history of man kind also manifests the same. It is significant that the announcement of Jesus’ birth came to shepherds telling of the arrival of the Lamb of God. He was also to be the *“good Shepherd”* the *“great Shepherd,”* and the *“chief Shepherd”* of God’s sheep.

“They were sore afraid:” we are able to readily grasp the element of shock here. We do not wonder at their being seized with fright, as the Heavenly Message broke the stillness of the night, with the overwhelming splendor of the light and the surprising suddenness of that sight. Yet another factor should be realized. This was still the Age of the Law, a time when often a supernatural presence meant danger. But, glory to God! Into that Age of the trembling servant came the rejoicing Son. That marvelous light must have been

indeed an amazing, exciting, and yet frightening sight. But here was an announcement of “*better things*” to come, “*the wisdom that is from above*” descending “*from the Father of lights.*”

“Fear Not:” the messenger’s sweet comfort calmed them and enabled them to understand the Message, in order to enjoy its benefits and to share its joy. “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*” – Lk. 2:11. God’s good news told of deliverance for mankind, and of the Saviour who is able “*to save to the uttermost*” – **the Christ**, He is the One especially anointed and supernaturally empowered to fully carry to completion the Father’s will and purpose. He is **the Lord**, the Son, who is to be the supreme Controller.

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men” – Lk. 2:12-14.

Oh, what a happy Message! The “*good tidings of great joy*” moved the heavenly host to great rejoicing, giving “*glory to God in the highest.*” The wise men had their sign in the star, but these shepherds were to find theirs in the stable, Verses nine to fourteen record what they heard from heaven. Verses fifteen and sixteen record what they saw on earth – “*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*”

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.”

The reaction to this Message, after they got over the initial shock, was to check it out, to go and look unto what they heard. Therefore, by experience, they knew their Message was true. They relayed the news, they published it, made it “*known abroad*” – V. 17. Now, they were not chosen to carry this good news, because of their education or religious authority. They were not kings nor part of the Sanhedrin, but just common working people. They were not doing anything unusual or especially worthy of note. They were just “*abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*”

When the Message came, they put the Lord first. It is very evident that they left their flock to the Lord’s care, and fulfilled the ministry at hand. In their message, they did not tell what they thought or imagined. They did not preach themselves or their feelings or how it affected them. But the effect their testimony had on others showed that it had moved and excited them.

“They wondered:” *“And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them”* – Lk. 2:18-20.

They that truly hear today also wonder. I would to God that all would wonder more. The “*good tidings of great joy*” are

still awe-inspiring and amazing. Throughout the history of the world, many have been struck with awe; but most of them have not been moved to true adoration. What a wonder. The revelation of the riches of God's glory and goodness and grace when received into the heart of man, must result in worship.

“Mary pondered:” Mary weighed these things, turned them over in her mind, dwelt on them, and gave them due consideration. Before that she *“kept,”* treasured up the things told about the Christ Child. The psalmist wrote *“Selah.”* Paul said, *“Think on these things.”* God's people are often made to wonder, but are also prone to forget.

The Bible is such a treasure chest of God's testimony of Jesus. It is just marvelous. Let us not just wonder at its Message but digest it, pondering its meaning for us personally. Treasuring up in our hearts that which we have heard and seen, we are caused to wonder at that which we have been given to ponder. God's good news requires faith of its beneficiaries. Believing God's Word leads to beholding His works; and, hence, blessing His worthy Name.

The Shepherds returned to their fields and flocks, to their business, rejoicing. We also do well to glorify God for each opportunity given us to hear God's Word and see His work, and for its agreement in our experience. We, too, praise God for the things happening just like we have been told.

“Good tidings of great joy:” God said it. They sought it. They saw it, They shared it. They shouted it.

J. D.

THE LAST DAYS

Anita Clark



“So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou saying, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith the LORD; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the LORD of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem” Zech. 1:14-16.

The LORD God speaking to Zechariah prophesies of the temple that would be built again after Israel would return from the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, where they were held in exile. God kept His promise and allowed them to return not as a free nation, but under the control and auspice of Gentile nations. Time marched on with them under the rule of Babylon, then Persia, then Greece and then Rome, at which time Jesus the Redeemer came. Gentile times would have been over if they would have believed in their Messiah, but they rejected Him. For this reason, although the political times of the Gentiles continued and are still going on today, spiritually, God turned to the Gentiles to take out a people for His name sake. (Acts 15:14-18).

A good explanation of God’s dealings with Israel is found in Romans 9,10 & 11. False teachers today declare that God has set Israel aside forever and that the blessings once prophesied to be Israel’s are now the Gentiles. Romans 11:1 & 2 states, “I say then,

Has God cast away His people? God forbid...God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew.” The Scripture is plain that God will return to Israel and deal with them again and they will be reinstated into their special place.

In our lifetime we have seen God miraculously call the Children of Israel out of nations through out the world to come back to the land. Thousands have come, and of course the greatest miracle is that in 1948 the nation of Israel was re-established as a full-fledged nation recognized by the United Nation. Israelites who have come back to the land, have relearned Hebrew as the official language of their country. This has never ever happened in history before, that a lost language would be restored, with a nation which was displaced for almost two thousand years. However, many in the nation don't even believe in God. God has some work to do. He has a plan to bring them to their senses. There is a terrible time yet to come, which will bring them to their knees in recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ. They will enter the tribulation that is coming upon the world with a false hope in a world leader who seems to have all the answers to their problems (Antichrist). He will make a covenant with them for seven years, but will break that covenant (Daniel 9:27) and begin to persecute them. The end will finally come with the revelation of Jesus Christ coming in the clouds of glory. All who are left of the nation of Israel will believe in Christ and accept Him as their Messiah. How we should “pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS - Talks by the Security Council Permanent members have been going on in Geneva, Switzerland to try to get Iran to give up their designs to continue to develop a nuclear bomb. Iran declares that they will not give up developing its nuclear energy program and demands; that it has the right to have

a peaceful program for domestic use. Secretary of State John Kerry of U.S.A., the European Union, Russia, Britain, and Germany attended the meetings along with Iran. They came to a temporary agreement, which after 6 months will end in more talks. The sanctions will continue against Iran, but they made modest concessions such as “recognition of Iran’s right for uranium enrichment (supposedly for peaceful purposes), with no manufacturing of any new centrifuges. It halts all major new work at the Arak reactor, a source of plutonium which can be used for a bomb, it opens up facilities to inspectors, Inspections will be carried out to verify that Iran is complying with the rules of “no enrichment of uranium to bomb quality.”

Israel is against this agreement and feels that Iran is just stalling for time and that there has not been a change in their desire to destroy Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel says, “Israel is ready to act alone to stop Iran from getting a nuclear bomb.” Saudi Arabia and the gulf states are shocked that the U.S. would negotiate a deal with minimal consulting, and apparently ignoring their vital national concerns.

Iran is a nation (in Bible times known as Persia), along with Russia, Germany and Turkey spoken of in Ezekiel 38-39 concerning the war that these will try to perpetrate against Israel in the end time. Iran has threatened to “blow Israel off the face of the map.” They have made major threats against the U.S.A. and also, Russia has made inroads in several areas of the Middle East recently. They have taken the initiative concerning Syria’s chemical weapons, offering help to Syria to get these destroyed. Also, recently they have been in negotiations between Russia and Turkey.

It seems that the scene is being set for these nations mentioned in Ezekiel to come together against Israel. We know what the Scripture says. They will be destroyed upon the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:2). It reads, “And I will turn thee back, and leave but a sixth part of thee, and I will cause thee to come up from the north parts and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel. It appears that after the Antichrist makes the Covenant with Israel, there will be a time of peace on the earth (Dan. 9:27). The time in Revelation 6:1-2, when the White Horse rider comes out with a bow, but no arrows, shows this period of peace, actually false peace. Then, a Red Horse rider comes out (vs. 3,4) taking peace from the earth. This may be the war of Ezekiel 38-39. Before the declared peace, the overcomers of the Church Age will be taken to heaven in the rapture (I Thess. 4:13-18). We very well could be that close to that glorious time.

WEIRD WEATHER & NATURAL DISASTER - In the year 2012 there were 270 tornadoes, but now in 2013 there have been 903 reported. There has been 73 fatalities in the U.S., 31 in Bangladesh, 24 in China, and 3 in Turkey accredited to Tornadoes this year.

Beside all this we recently have had the largest Typhoon ever recorded in the world in the Philippines. It is believed that around 6,000 persons have died so far. Thousand are homeless there, and much suffering. Indonesia also suffered from the same typhoon. In India's east coast two separate cyclones hit the area causing evacuation of 100,000 people.

Earthquakes and volcanos have always been closely related. Some say they are the fuse that ignites volcanos. Areas of the earth where earthquakes are prevalent, are most usually the same areas where

volcanoes abound. Both occur in the boundaries of tectonic plates, which make up the earth's surface. Recently they are increasing exponentially in magnitude worldwide. Some are trying to blame this on Climate Change. I believe that it is due to the end of the age as the Lord warned us of these events and to be ready. Jesus warned the world in Matthew 24 that there would be signs in the end time such as these.

There are approximately 1,500 active volcanoes around the world at the present time, but recently many have begun to erupt in different places sort of unexpectedly. Seven different volcanos started erupting within a few days of each other. Mount Etna in Italy appears to be growing in intensity, and is a potential disaster waiting to happen. Off the coast of Japan a new volcano is creating a new island. In Mexico the Colima volcano blew its top after a period of relative calm, while in Guatemala the "Fire Mountain" erupted sending up a moderate ash cloud which fell over nearby towns. Shock waves traveled over 6 miles away causing doors and windows to rattle, but no damage so far. Another volcano in Guatemala called Vanuatu is causing ash to build up on farm land, which is causing great concern. And Indonesia's Sinabung volcano started erupting recently, and Karymsky Volcano in central Russia. There are many more which have been erupting for some time.

All these happenings are signs of the soon coming of Christ. I hope that you are watching and waiting for His return at anytime. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you Who also will do it" (I Thess. 5:23-24). Be watching and waiting!

Awesome Encounters

With the amazing technology we have, and the fantastic ability to create realistic movies using computer generated images, we are becoming a culture that is not amazed at many things any more. With our current trend towards improving kids self esteem, we are losing our sense of respect for our elders and those of authority.

Maybe these are some of the factors that cause a lack of awe when we encounter God. I am reminded that in the scriptures, we have numerous examples of those that encountered God and were so awed that they fell on their faces.

Genesis 17:3, *“And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him...”*. Numbers 22:31, *“Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.”* Joshua 5:14, *“And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?”*

In the Old Testament, we find people who encountered God in different ways, but they were always amazed at His presence. They recognized their unworthiness to be in God’s presence. The presence of God should never be taken for granted.

Beginning in the garden, when Adam and Eve sinned, they hid themselves from God's presence. They lost that daily close communion of walking in the garden with God. However, God did not want to lose communion with man, so He had a plan that would bring us back to Him. Throughout the Old Testament, God demonstrated that He wanted to have fellowship with man.

Today, we experience the presence of God when we read His Word, as He speaks to us. We experience His presence when we spend time in prayer. In both cases, we should always be in awe of the fact that God would be, not only willing, but desirous of our fellowship.

Remember the disciples when they were with Jesus on the mount, and God spoke. Matthew 17:6, "*And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.*" Maybe sometimes we need to be reminded the importance of God's presence.

God is not wanting us to be afraid of Him, but He is God and deserves our reverence. We are so privileged to have access to God's presence, so it is a sad state we have come to if we are not constantly awed by the presence of God.

Through all of eternity, we will still be awed in the presence of God. We find the four and twenty elders falling on their faces in the presence of God. Revelation 4:10, and Revelation 19:4.

Gordon Crook

RUTH

Debra Isenbletter

Chapter 2

There are several wonderful titles for this second chapter of Ruth that I found a blessing:

1. A Humble Heart (Grace School of the Bible)
2. Ruth Serving (Scofield)
3. Meeting with Christ (Ironside)
4. Submission {to Naomi, to Boaz} (My title)
5. Service: Ruth Working (Wiersbe)
 - 1) We must live by *Faith* in the Lord (v1-3)
 - 2) We must live by the *Grace* of God (v4-16)
 - 3) We must live in *Hope* (v17-23)
6. Ruth's Rights (Ryrie Bible)
 - 4) Her *Right* to Glean (v1-3)
 - 5) The *Results* of her Gleaning (v4-17)
 - a) Boaz Meets Ruth (v4-7)
 - b) Boaz Protects Ruth (v8-13)
 - c) Boaz Provides for Ruth (v14-16)
 - 6) The *Report* of her Gleaning (v17-23)

No matter what title you give this chapter as you meditate upon it, you see two prominent characters, **Ruth** and **Boaz**. You see how they are both led by the Lord and yielded to the Lord. Ruth's overall characteristic is service and submission and Boaz's grace. Does this not picture our relationship with the Lord Jesus? – Love and Grace! Warren Wiersbe made a statement concerning this

chapter that I found a blessing: “*Boaz is surprised by love and Ruth is overwhelmed by grace.*”

Ruth 2:1 – “And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.”

The question concerning whether Naomi has a kinsman is answered in the beginning of this verse: “*And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s.*” The word for “kinsman” is “moda” which means “acquaintance.” This is not the word “goel” which means “one who redeems.” Later we will see that word used in connection with Boaz (2:20). But first we see only the relationship, and that it is a distant one. It seems as though neither one is aware of the other at this time, only God is!

Naomi has been gone, she doesn’t know Boaz and may not even be aware of him at this time. She had never mentioned or considered him as a possible answer to their need on their journey home, for her words to Ruth were all about how there was no provision for her for a husband. Later, once Naomi is aware of Boaz, she will claim a deeper relationship and the obligation to redeem will come from this relationship.

Strong Encyclopedia says there are four Hebrew words translated in the KJV, three indicate a simple relationship (*kinswoman* (Num 27:11) or *kin* (Lev 18:12-13); *kinswomen* (Lev 18:17), literally *acquaintance* (Ruth 2:1, Ps 38:11); and *kinsfolk* (Job 19:14) literally *near*. The word used in this verse for Boaz speaks of “acquaintance,” showing that Naomi doesn’t yet realize

there is a deeper relationship, and she won't realize it until Ruth meets Boaz. The fourth Hebrew word for *kinsman* (goel) will be claimed by Naomi in verse 20. There the word not only speaks of a relationship but implies obligations arising from that relationship. The primary idea is that of coming to *help* or rescue, of giving *protection, redeeming, avenging*. We will go into the meaning of that word in more detail in verse 20. But at this time neither Naomi or Ruth is aware of Boaz or this deeper relationship. It is not until Ruth steps out in faith, goes into that field and begins to glean, that she meets Boaz and will lay claim to him!

The description of that kinsman is seen in the rest of the verse: His Status: "*a mighty man of wealth*". His Family: "*of the family of Elimelech*". His Name: "*and his name was Boaz.*"

The first thing we see is that Boaz was "*a mighty man of wealth*" or "*man of position and wealth.*" Two words are used to describe Boaz: Mighty and Wealth. The word "mighty" means "warrior," "powerful," "chief," or "champion." The word "wealth" means "riches," "strength," "power," "valor." Both these words described the strength of the man, not just the wealth of the man. They speak of "power both in virtue, authority and riches" (Geneva Bible). They speak of his standing among God's people: Militarily, and Materially, Physically and Spiritually.

The Hebrew words can be translated "*man of standing*" or "*mighty man of valor.*" These are the same words that are used of **Gideon** (Judges 6:12) and **Jephthah** (Judges 11:1). Each of these men were men of valor, mighty men,

they were capable men. God knew what they were capable of, even if they did not, and then they proved themselves in battle, in testing and these qualities were seen by everyone else.

The next thing we see is that Boaz was “*of the family of Elimelech*”. He is from her husband’s family line and the name “Elimelech” (My God is king) also applies to him. The difference is he has lived up to the meaning of that name.

Finally we see his name: “*and his name was Boaz.*” The name “Boaz” means “in him is strength” or “strength”. His strength will come from his God who is his King! (My God is King). His strength is two-fold: strength of *body* and strength of *spirit*. The strength of this name is shown forth physically in that there were two pillars in the front of the temple, and one of those pillars was called “Boaz” (1 Ki 7:21; 2 Chron 3:17).

You find Boaz’s genealogy in Ruth 4:18-22 and 1 Chron 2:10-15, and his grandfather is called “a prince of Judah.” In those references you find the men of his family listed, but in Matthew 1 you find the women listed also, and one of those women is Rahab the harlot (Mt 1:5). There are wonderful similarities between Rahab and Ruth. Rahab was a Canaanite (Joshua 2) and Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1). Rahab gave a profession of faith (Josh 2:11) and Ruth gave a profession of faith (Ruth 1:16). Boaz would remember Rahab and have sympathy for Ruth, there would be no prejudice, he would judge her by her actions, not her past!

To be continued

A Song of Ruth

By Rebecca Asbury, Copyright 2013

Each with a burden on her shoulder,
Two were trying to agree.
One was young and one was older
From a blighted family,
In a country where, of old,
The sons of Lot had dwelt.
One said, "Turn you back, my daughter,"
Unaware of how she felt:

"Don't send me back to Moab;
I'm bound for Israel.
What have I to do with Chemosh?
I choose the Living God.
I'll not refuse the springs of Shiloh:
It's with all my heart that I go
To bow and pray before the Living God."

She's lost her place and station,
Her protector and her spouse.
Yet sets her face to leave her nation
And all her father's house
So not to lose her final hope,
Her mentor and her friend,
Who serves no other but Jehovah,
And so she says again:

"Don't send me back to Moab;
I'm bound for Israel.
What have I to do with Chemosh?
I choose the Living God.
I'll not refuse the springs of Shiloh;
It's with all my heart that I go
To bow and pray before the Living God."

Two now select a path at Bethlehem
Through bowing barley fields.
The wheat waves thick and green but promising
Just as fine a yield.
A righteous man of wealth and gain
Comes to bless his harvesters
And finds a foreign girl reduced
To gleaning scattered grain.

“Has our Naomi back from Moab
And this damsel grown so poor?
Besides the grain each reaper leaves
Let him contrive to make it more.
Abandon grain among the sheaves;
She’ll not go hungry from my door.
For, in all the fields of Boaz,
We shall drop it purposely.”

Long after Ruth has done with barley,
There is yet a harvest more.
The damsel gleans, and beats and winnows—
Lays away the wheat in store.
Naomi’s meager granary
Is now bursting and replete
With that which Ruth, the newest bride
In Bethlehem, will never eat.

“O, tell the news in Moab.
Praise God, O, Israel!
Proclaim it in shrines of Chemosh:
I choose the Living God.
Pure shines the Lamp God in Shiloh;
To that beacon sure will I go
To bow and pray before a Living God.
I bow and pray before the Living God.”

God Loves His Children

Part 2 of 5

by Carson Richards

Let us consider another aspect of God's love. John 14:20-23. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and shall manifest myself unto him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that you wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Here we see that the Father loves especially those who listen to His Son. God, being love, and being infinite, surely has different channels to show for His love. This channel is different from that we saw toward the world or even us when we were in the world and unbelieving. This is one of family relationship. Eph. 3:14-15, "For I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom; the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

Again we say that God is very family conscious, and His basic attitude toward them is love. It is real. It is deep. It is lasting. Yet He wants it to be two ways. He is not a God of stone: He likes to have affection returned. I Cor. 8:3 – "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him." He

responds to our affection. It is a part of our saving experience, or the life we receive at salvation.

However, this love has a rival, and applies to us because of the old creation life. I John 2:15-16. “Love not the world, neither the things of the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” This is the instruction that there is a world spirit that is contrary to the divine love in the Christ life in us.

As specified here, it permeates all three parts of men: body, soul, and spirit. It is a different affection than the Father gives us. We don’t get ridiculous as some would have us to do, and enter into a complete state of self-abnegation. We are not rid of all natural feeling; much of our training for heaven passes through natural affection, kept within bounds and uses the materials of this world God places in our hands. So disregarding the devil’s taunts, we view this thing as strong affection, love is a strong word, and a matter of spirits, that of the new creation, which uses all things toward God; and the old creation which is a strong affection away from God.

For example, in 2 Pet. 1:4, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that my these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Here the Father is presented as much greater than the ambition of the world spirit, and much better as an object of our affection.

Jesus in His great intercessory prayer, John 17:15, says “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” He surely, facing the reality of this world, placed a blanket about us, Amen! Who of us would ever figure out the varying course of this world? Jesus in the foreknowledge, prayed for this enclosure of His righteousness to protect us from the evil of an evil world. It surely takes skill to guide a sheep among the cruel fangs of many wolves.

This is a love of concern, too. I Peter 5:7 says: “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” We may often apply this fine truth to the extremities of opposition, but it seems to cover the basic cares of our sojourn here in this earth. One of the over-throwing features of the recipients of the sower in the gospels was ““cares of this life.” So they have no right to do this; the Lord assumes this responsibility, too. When this care is evident (natural things are going well), it is easy to say this. Other times it is under test, and we shrink from it, but it is just as true one time as another. Praise the Lord!

In John 15:7, we see that a constancy toward the Lord gets results in all phases of our life. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” How simple these things sound! How tried we get concerning them! How true they always are! Also, I Corinthians 16:2 makes it pretty plain. We note especially the phrase: “As God has prospered him.” I would take it from that verse that God has a plan for the natural needs of every child of His, and that should eliminate all eye-slants at what the other fellow has. What God in His love decides should be decisive, amen!

Now good old Romans 8 comes up. It is the overcomers' chapter. It speaks of a surmounting love. One that mounts over the obstacles with the power of God in our spirit. Verses 38 and 39 say: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angles, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, or height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." So obstacles there are in the pathway of the Fathers' love for His children, but they are not insurmountable. Love finds a way. We are so glad it is that way. How can that be? It is the love of the Father for His Son, Number One, transmitted to the believer in Him, or it is "in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

One of the salient points of this personal love of God for us, His children, is its lasting quality. We have lived long enough to see the fickleness of human love (apart from God, for we are not demeaning Christ-given human love, either): nevertheless, our Lord expressed divine love as recorded in John 13:1. "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He left this life loving His disciples. That is beautiful, but it didn't stop. On the resurrection morn, he shouted, "O Joy." Surely this personal love continued through the grave. It also reaches the ascension life, for He said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (age)." What an extensive love! For whom? For each one of us who believe in Him.

Feast of Dedication

*“And it was at Jerusalem the **feast of the dedication**, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch.” John 10:22-23*

I believe this is the only time we find this feast mentioned in the Bible. It is Hanukkah, which many Jews celebrate in this season of the year. Hanukkah means “**dedication**.” This feast commemorates an event that occurred during the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament (about 165 BC). A Syrian King named Antiochus invaded Israel and demanded the Jews to abandon the worship of their God. He forced “Hellenization,” of Greek customs and religion on the Jews. To make sure that the Jews could not worship their God, he defiled the Temple in Jerusalem. He placed Greek idols in the Temple and sacrificed a sow on the altar. Antiochus took the title “Epiphanes” which means, “god manifested” and demanded to be worshiped.

God had promised Abraham many, many years before that He would **preserve** and **sustain** his descendants forever (Gen. 13:15; 17:7,8,13,19). God said to Abraham, “*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*” (Gen. 12:3), Christ would be born of his descendants.

God raised up a family of heroes, the Maccabees (their name means “hammer”). They led a small band in revolt against Antiochus and his mighty army and drove the Syrians out of Israel. The high point of that victory was

rededicating the Temple in Jerusalem. This is why the holiday is called Hanukkah (**dedication**).

There is a legend, that they needed consecrated oil to rekindle the sacred candelabra. They only found enough oil for one day and it would take eight full days to make enough oil for Temple use. Tradition says that a great miracle happened, called the “miracle of the oil.” The oil for one day continued to burn for eight whole days, enough time to make and sanctify new oil. That is why Hanukkah is celebrated for eight nights and why the Hanukkah menorah is lit for eight nights.

In any case Israel’s victory over Antiochus and his mighty army showed forth a great miracle of God’s **preserving** power. God would not allow Satan to use Antiochus to destroy Israel because of His promise to Abraham. If Satan could have destroyed the Jews, he would make God a liar and the promise to Abraham (Christ) could not be born of Abraham’s seed.

The Jews were well aware of the event that occasioned the Feast of Dedication when they approached Jesus on Solomon’s porch. They reasoned that if He was the Messiah, He had power to preserve them from the tyranny of the Romans, as God had preserved them from Antiochus (V. 24). Jesus answered them with a rebuke – *“I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me”* (V. 25). Jesus boldly asserted His Messiahship. The works that I do in My Father’s name bear witness of Me. They were His credentials from the Father. He had divine power to preserve and sustain His people, but

not in the way they hoped or expected. *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you”* (V. 26). They had the witness of His **words** and His **works** and they believe not. By refusing to acknowledge His words or works, they were rejecting Him and His Father.

*“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”* (Vs. 27-28). Those who believe on Him have a new nature and are called SHEEP. He plainly declares that His sheep SHALL NEVER PERISH. His power to preserve was **eternal** and **spiritual**. It was based on faith in Him as the Anointed One of God. The salvation He offered was not from Roman oppression, but from the oppression of Satan, sin and death. The dedication of the Temple was a reminder of God’s power to keep His promises and preserve His people. But One greater than the Temple stood on Solomon’s porch that day.

“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one” (Vs. 29-30). Jesus strongly affirms the **absolute security** of His people Oh, what words of assurance and comfort these are. THEY ARE MINE, He declares, *“My sheep.”* The Father gave them to Me. He is greater than all, no one is able to pluck them out of the Father’s hand. Then he declares His oneness with the Father, *“I and the father are One.”*

It was fresh in their minds because of Hanukkah, how they had rightly reject the false claims of Antiochus. They asked

Jesus for a plain statement of His identity and when He told them He was the true One, what is their reaction? Unbelief. They could not deny His power nor His goodness, but the fact that an apparent ordinary Man should claim to be the Son of God, was too much for them to believe. They “*took up stones again to stone him*” (V. 31). But they could not carry out their evil purpose, for it was not yet His time. They rejected their Messiah and missed an even greater miracle than Israel’s against-all-odds victory over the overwhelming Syrian army. What they missed was greater than if Jesus had saved them from the Roman government. They missed the miracle of Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus has the power to **preserve** those who come to Him. Heb. 7:25

God keeps His promises – Isa. 7:14; 9:6. Jesus fulfilled these promises. In Him God has proven His faithfulness to Israel and to all the world. He will **save** and **keep** all those who call upon His name through faith in Jesus. He has made each believer to be His own Temple, where Emmanuel, God with us has taken up residence. May we dedicate ourselves anew to live for Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Prepared by E. J. D.

*I'll live for Him who died for me;
How happy then my soul shall be!
I'll live for Him who died for me,
My Savior and my God!*