

Concurring Witnesses

Looking Unto Jesus

JOSEPH HOPPER, Th.D.,
Southern Presbyterian Missionary to Korea,
Supply Minister, Royal Oak Presbyterian Church,
Marion, Virginia.

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PREFACE

There are here presented five "Concurring Witnesses." First of all, the five agree in the One of whom they witness. They all point to Christ. Whereas successive revelations are given to them, it is the one unchanging, everlasting gospel which is being unfolded. Using the figure of another, there is first the acorn, then the vigorous sapling, then the shade tree, then the pilot's signal tree, then the giant tree—all pointing to, and giving promise of the blossoming and rich fruitage as completely revealed in the New Testament.

The first study brings into view the individual, the second the family, the third the congregation, the fourth the nation, and the fifth all nations. However, these are not mutually exclusive.

Again, in each of these studies there is kept in mind the man behind the message together with the method. The different characteristics and methods are studied in their relation to our common task of Christian witnessing, and are applied accordingly.

The Scripture text used in this study is the American Revised Version of the Bible. Of helps by Bible scholars which have been of special value the following may well head the list: "Discourses of Redemption," by Stuart Robinson; "The Christ of the Old Testament," by Edward Mack; and Books on Genesis and Exodus by M. R. Turnbull. References to others will be found in the various chapters.

In our approach to this study may it be in the spirit of the prayer of Psalm 119:18, and with a consciousness of the promise of John 14:26.

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OUTLINE OF CHAPTER ONE

Abel—Beginning and Continuing to Witness.

I. ABEL'S ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER—THE FIRST MAN.

1. Four looks at Adam.
2. Results of the first gospel.

II. HIS PRICELESS HERITAGE—THE FIRST GOSPEL.

The acorn and the oak illustration.

- Genesis 3:15
- | | |
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| { | 1. The Conflict Continued. |
| | 2. The Conquest Certain. |
| | 3. The Cross Contemplated. |

III. HIS PERSONAL FAITH EXPRESSED IN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.

1. A faith that controlled the life.
2. The expression of faith in sacrifice — worship and witness.
3. Why the offering was acceptable.
 - (1) The quality of faith.
 - (2) The kind of sacrifice.

IV. THE FIRST MARTYR OF FAITH—HIS LIVING VOICE.

1. The meaning of "martus."
2. Why Abel was a martyr.
3. His living voice — Compare Revelation 6:9-11; Hebrews 11:39-40.
4. What was the immediate effect of Abel's witness?

V. THE WAY OF CAIN—FATAL TO WITNESSING.

1. The two brothers contrasted.
2. A characterization of Cain.
3. What kind of a witness did Cain leave?

VI. ESSENTIALS FOR BEGINNING AND CONTINUING TO WITNESS, Hebrews 11:4; Romans 12:1-2.

1. The motive adequate.
2. The offering acceptable.
3. The life approved.

The kind of mother needed for Christian witnessing (Illustration)

CHAPTER ONE

Abel—Beginning and Continuing to Witness.

THEME VERSES: Hebrews 11:4 and Romans 12:1-2

Assignment:

- 1) Read Genesis, chapters 3 and 4 to get Abel's family background.
- 2) In order to understand the Abel story study the subject of sin in chapter 3 — (1) Its entrance, (2) Its enticement, (3) Its essence (4) Its effect, and (5) The way of escape from sin.
- 3) Study in chapter 4 why the offering was acceptable in one case and not in the other.
- 4) Study Abel in the New Testament — five direct references, noting what each reference adds to complete the view, Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:51; Hebrews 11:4, 12:24; I John 3:12. In all our Bible study let us remember that "the New Testament is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New revealed."
- 5) How may I begin and continue Christian witnessing?

I. ABEL'S ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER—THE FIRST MAN.

Since he had no grandparents, we begin our study of Abel with his parental background. When Adam appeared as the crowning work of God's creation we believe that physically he was mature and perfect, not a babe, nor a weakling; socially, he was civilized, not a savage in the forest; morally, he was made in the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In relation to the creatures he had dominion over them.

Taking a second look at the first man we see him as the representative head of the human race, Genesis 2:16-17 and Shorter Catechism question No. 12. In this capacity he was under covenant with God, and with his wife "dwelt in the beautiful garden of Eden."

A third look sees him ruined in the fall, that tragedy which was most colossal in its character and consequences. Abel's father is found in a state of sin, shame, sorrow, condemnation, death. While in his estate of sin and misery the light shines from heaven. The Scripture presents him as the hearer of the first gospel. As God was pronouncing His three-fold curse as a result of the first sin there sounds out the first gospel — *the promise of a Saviour to come*, Genesis 3:15.

Did Abel's parents accept this first good news — this gospel of "Paradise Lost"? There are a number of suggestions which seem to indicate that our first parents were saved. One is the significance of the name of Eve, "the mother of all living." Then there seems to be a suggestion of sacrifice at the gates of Eden. Then we have Eve's exclamation at the birth of her first-born, "I have gotten a man, even Jehovah." Did she have hope that this son might be the fulfillment of the first gospel promise? Again, in the naming of Seth — "the appointed seed," was there evidence of faith? Of this we are sure, as witnessed in the New Testament record, that Abel did exercise faith, he being the first one mentioned by name on the roll of heroes of faith in the epistle to the Hebrews, who "being dead yet speaketh." We wonder who first presented to him the object of faith. May it have been at his mother's knee he heard the first good news of a Saviour to come? Was mother Eve the first gospel witness?

II. HIS PRICELESS HERITAGE—THE FIRST GOSPEL.

Let us pause to listen with Abel to that first gospel story. Let us look at the germ which we find in its flower and fruitage in the New Testament.

"As the oak perfect and entire is in the acorn that buries itself in the soil, and expands and extends an ever perfect life 'til it becomes the gigantic monarch of the forest; so the entire gospel of redemption was in that germinal promise concerning 'the seed of the woman,' which, buried in the clods of a wasted Eden, shot forth its life parallel with the growth of humanity. Now it appears as the tender twig of promise to Enoch and Noah; now the vigorous sapling to the faith of Abraham; now the refreshing shade-tree leafing out in the gorgeous ritual of Moses; now the well-known pilot's signal tree that guides the course of David and Isaiah; now putting forth its blossom of plenteous promise in the gospel of John the Baptist; and now bearing the rich harvest of ripe fruit in the preaching of the apostles under 'the ministration of the Spirit.' Thus through all the ages in all divers manners of its communication, it is one and the same gospel, embodying the same great truths in its various stages of development."¹

The Bible is largely an expansion of Genesis 3:15. Considering this first gospel in the light of the whole range of Scripture, let us note:

1. *The Conflict Continued* — "enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed." Begun in Eden, it has continued throughout all the generations, and will continue on to the end, when "These shall war against the Lamb," Revelations 17:14a.
2. *The Conquest Certain*. From the time of the prophecy, "He shall bruise thy head," sinful man has been assured that the victory over Satan

¹*Discourses of Redemption*, Stuart Robinson, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

is sure. "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," I John 3:8b. John tells us in the book of Revelation that "the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful."

3. *The Cross Contemplated.* In this very first gospel which we believe to be the divine revelation that called forth the faith of Abel, is given the reason for this victory. "Thou shalt bruise his heel," we believe is the simple prophecy foreshadowing the sufferings and death of Christ. Victory comes only by way of the cross, "through him that loved us," Romans 8:37.

III. HIS PERSONAL FAITH EXPRESSED IN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.

Abel had a faith that controlled his life. Dr. E. C. Caldwell has said the theme of the book of James is, "Only a faith that controls the life can save the soul." It is equally true that only a faith that controls the life can build the church.

In Abel we have an illustration of a living faith which was expressed in sacrifice. See Genesis 4:4. This act of worship was also an act of witnessing. It may have been on the Sabbath; verse 3, in the Hebrew reads, "at the end of days." The Christian regularly at worship is a most effective means of witnessing.

The record does not tell us *how* God indicated to Abel that his sacrifice was acceptable. Did He send down fire from heaven to consume the offering as He did with the offerings of Moses and Elijah? The Scripture does tell us *why* the offering was acceptable. Study Genesis 4:4b, 7a; Matt. 23:35; Hebrews 11:4; I John 3:12. The Scriptural emphasis is upon the fact that God saw the living faith in the heart and life of the worshipper. Abel had a quality of faith that controlled his life, so that in the New Testament he is repeatedly spoken of as being righteous, and again the inspired record tells us that his works were righteous.

Jehovah had respect unto Abel and unto his offering. First with the heart right in the sight of God, then the kind of offering presented was acceptable unto God, "the firstlings of the flock and the fat thereof." Abel's conception of the spiritual significance of the shedding of the blood of the lamb may have been dim, but there was a spark of faith there in a Saviour to come, and his offering was a picture of Calvary. Although Abel may have seen faintly the meaning of the sacrifice, God looked at it and saw clearly the cross. No wonder Jehovah had respect unto Abel and unto his offering.

IV. THE FIRST MARTYR OF FAITH—HIS LIVING VOICE.

"Martus," the Greek word in the New Testament sometimes translated "witness" and sometimes "martyr," is the word used with reference to the

cloud of witnesses in Hebrews of whom Abel is the first name mentioned. A "martus" in this connection "is one who testifies to what he has seen or heard or experienced." It refers to witnesses who have suffered and conquered, who have endured and won, witnesses to the power and faithfulness of God.

Cain living in sin, and Abel living in righteousness led to the martyrdom of Abel. The apostle John, speaking of Cain in relation to his brother, says, "And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous." From the beginning living faith has incurred the hatred of the world. Jesus said to his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John 15:19.

Notwithstanding death Abel continues to speak. God said to Cain after he had killed his brother, "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."

Concerning Abel the book of Hebrews says, "He being dead yet speaketh." Ye are come . . . to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel. Not only did Abel have a faith that controlled his life, but that faith was "the ground of his living activity after death. . . . On the whole it appears to be most natural to see in the sacrifice the means through which the testimony was borne, and in the faith which prompted the sacrifice that whereby Abel still speaks. . . . The blood, 'the life,' is regarded as still living. This thought finds expression in the first record of death (Genesis 4:10), but the voice 'of the blood of Jesus' is doubly contrasted with the voice of the blood of Abel. That appealing to God, called for vengeance, and making itself heard in the heart of Cain, brought despair; but the blood of Christ pleads with God for forgiveness, and speaks peace to man."²

Concurring with the continuing voice of Abel are those of the martyrs pictured in the last book of the Bible, Rev. 6:9-11. These are the sacrificed lives of the saints crying out for judgment upon a wicked world. As ideally conceived, there is not here a desire on the part of the saints for personal revenge upon their murderers, but a longing to see the retributive justice of a holy God exercised in the punishment of sin. "And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect," Hebrews 11:39, 40.

"Yet saints their watch are keeping
Their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping,
Shall be the morn of song."

²The Epistle to the Hebrews, Westcott, published by Macmillan Co., New York. Used by permission.

We are left to wonder what was the immediate effect of the witness of Abel upon his own parents. It may have been used of God to give to Adam and Eve just that inspiration and challenge they needed for faithfully witnessing to their posterity. I can imagine that the Spirit of God may have used Adam as an effective witness in those early days. He lived all told 930 years, and was a contemporary of Enoch for 143 years. Did he tell Enoch the first gospel, and did he tell him of Abel as a witness of the power of faith? And did Enoch tell Methuselah, and did Methuselah pass it on to Noah?

V. THE WAY OF CAIN — FATAL TO WITNESSING.

The two brothers of Genesis, chapter 4, give us a real study in contrasts — and the story of Cain is another chapter on the subject of sin. While some suggest that these brothers may have been twins, we know that they were far from being alike in other ways. List the contrasts. According to Hebrews 11:4, Abel's offering was prompted by a true faith. The inference is that Cain did not have such faith. The New Testament repeatedly characterizes Abel as righteous, whereas it presents Cain as a type of ungodliness. The attitude of Cain in Genesis suggests at the root the sin of pride. Dr. M. R. Turnbull says, "Spiritual pride, a total lack of any sense of sin, that was Cain's fundamental sin." See Proverbs 21:27. He becomes angry towards God, who does not desire that any should perish, but that all come to repentance.

The gradual steps of the downward course of Cain lead on to murder. He is the first murderer, in contrast to the first martyr. Following his murder comes the denial of the guilt, and the disclaiming of any responsibility for his brother — a type of selfishness. Shall we call him the first opponent of missions? Alas, in the record can you find any evidence of Cain's repentance? The record tells us, "And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah," but it does not tell us that he ever came back. He reminds us of the young man in the New Testament who turned his back on Jesus.

What kind of a witness did Cain leave for the generations to come? Just one look at his descendants is a sufficient answer. "They were rank materialists. There is no mention of anything that would even suggest God. They sing of murders and revenge." (Turnbull). Just as in the New Testament Jude erects a danger signal to mark the way of Cain, and proclaims there a warning not to go that way, so the author of the epistle to the Hebrews heralds the living, triumphant faith of Abel. The first is fatal to witnessing, the second is essential to witnessing.

VI. ESSENTIALS FOR BEGINNING AND CONTINUING WITNESS.

1. The *motive adequate* for Christian witnessing. Abel began with a living faith in a Saviour to come. He saw the acorn, not the oak, yet in that acorn was revealed the mercies of God. God saw the cross, and accepted Abel's sacrifice and witness. "I beseech you, therefore . . . by the mercies of God." Here is the motive adequate. Dr. E. C. Caldwell says, "Love generated at the cross is the only true and adequate motive for Christian service."

"When I survey the wondrous cross,

* * * * *

Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

2. This leads us to the second essential, which is *the offering acceptable*. This is none other than the surrendered life — all to be laid on the altar, nothing to be held back. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God."

"I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

3. A third essential is *the life approved*. Abel "had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts." There must be a living out of the surrendered life. It must be not only "an act, but an activity," not only a presentation, but a process. "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed . . ." "Do not take this age as your fashion-plate." (A. T. Robertson). The fashion-plate of this age was set up by Cain. "Do not grow conformed to this world, but grow transformed." Grow transfigured into the likeness of the glorified Christ. Do not grow into sinning, but grow into shining.

Fresh in my memory is the life of an humble Christian mother, "who being dead, yet speaketh." After I had been in Korea in missionary service for about three years, one day one of her regular letters was received. She was then past three score years and ten. She already had two sons in full time Christian service, one a minister in the home-land, the other a missionary in the Far East. Now her only daughter with whom she made her home had decided to go as

a foreign missionary, and had told her mother about it. That mother who through the years had endured and won in the Christian race, who had a supreme desire and joy in giving her children to bear the message glorious, wrote me these words about her daughter's decision: "It is great to have another one of my dear ones called into the Master's service." Mothers with a triumphant faith like this are constantly needed that Christian witnessing may be continued "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER TWO

Abraham—Witnessing in the Home.

I. THE CENTRAL THEME OF ABRAHAM'S WITNESS—THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM.

1. The Promise—Genesis 12:3, last clause. Compare Genesis 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8.
 - (1) Its Messianic Message.
 - (2) Its Missionary Motive.
2. The Covenant, Genesis 17:1-11 and 22:16-18.
 - (1) The Time. Neh. 9:7-8.
 - (2) The Terms.
 - (3) The Token.

II. THE CONTROLLING TRAIT OF THE WITNESS—FAITH ISSUING IN OBEDIENCE.

"Implicit faith and instantaneous obedience" illustrated, John 8:56; Hebrews 11:8, 9, 10, 13, 17-19.

1. His response to the call of God.
2. His response to the covenant.
3. His response in time of supreme crisis. A life of separation, sojourning, sacrifice.

III. HIS PRICELESS WITNESS IN THE HOME—THE HOME OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH.

1. Its Purpose. See Genesis 12:2; Psalm 67:1-2.
2. Its Princess. See Hebrews 11:11 and I Peter 3:1-6.
3. Its Bigamy. See Genesis 16.
4. Its Worship. Altars built by Abraham at Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, Moriah; by Isaac at Beersheba; by Jacob at Shechem and Bethel.
5. Its Discipline. See Genesis 18:19.
6. Its Hospitality. See Genesis 18:1-8.
7. Its Child. See Romans 4:20-21; Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19.

IV. HOW MAY I WITNESS MOST EFFECTIVELY IN THE HOME?

1. Seven ways suggested.
2. "Thou and thy house," (Illustration).
3. "Teaching a Little Child to Pray," (Illustration).

CHAPTER TWO

Abraham—Witnessing in the Home.

THEME VERSES: Genesis 12:3, last clause, and Acts 2:39.

Assignment:

- 1) Read Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-11; and 22:1-19 looking out for the unifying thought.
- 2) Read again these same passages, and also Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19 looking out for the controlling trait in the life of Abraham.
- 3) Make a thorough study of the home-life of Abraham and Sarah. Genesis 12:2, 8; Hebrews 11:11-12; I Peter 3:5-6; Genesis 16; 18:1-8, 19; Hebrews 11:17-19.
- 4) How may I effectively witness in the home?

INTRODUCTION

Abraham lived about midway between Adam and Christ. Note the prominence given to him in Scripture. He is the principal subject of twelve or more chapters in Genesis. His name appears in the first verse of the New Testament, and in the song of Mary and the song of Zacharias in Luke 1. The promise to Abraham must have been in the mind of Peter at Pentecost, Acts 2:39. Paul in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 deals largely with Abraham. Repeatedly in Scripture Abraham is given the distinction of being the friend of God.

Study his background of idolatry, in a pagan home in Ur of the Chaldees. See Joshua 24:2. The findings of archaeology seem to indicate that Terah, his father, may have been a priest in a pagan cult. When God appeared unto Abraham He "took the initiative and revealed Himself to this devotee of a false religion in a city of pagan art and magnificence." (Wm. C. Robinson).

I. THE CENTRAL THEME OF ABRAHAM'S WITNESS—THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM.

In Genesis, chapter 12, we find *the promise* which is the good news pre-announced to Abraham. With slight variations it is found several times in Genesis, then in Acts and in Galatians. In general it was a promise of a land, a seed, and a universal blessing.

"The principal thing (in the promise) is that all mankind shall be blessed in Abraham and his seed. This statement is repeated five times in Genesis

alone. As the whole promise to Abraham and his seed is the central fact in our record of the Patriarchs, so the clause of blessing to mankind is set forth as central in the promise itself. That is the heart of the heart of the book of Genesis."¹

"And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed," Galatians 3:8. Note well

1. Its Messianic Message.
2. Its Missionary Motive.

Already in the first gospel the Redeemer had been proclaimed as the seed of the woman. Now it is narrowed down to the seed of Abraham. "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Galatians 3:16. Whatever else may be included in the promise to Abraham, the apostle makes it quite clear that it contains a Messianic Message. *It points direct to Christ, through whom the blessing would come.*

Then inseparately connected with this is the Missionary Motive. The promise points directly to Christ as *the Saviour of the world*. It foreshadows the world-wide scope of the gospel. Through the seed of Abraham, which is Christ, all the families of the earth are to be blessed.

The promise of Genesis, chapter 12, seems to crystallize into *the covenant* of chapter 17, then the oath-bound covenant of chapter 22. The promise and the covenant may well be taken together for they are identical in many ways, having similar provisions. As the heart of the promise is Messianic and Missionary, so in the covenant (chapter 17) there is brought into view the people of God for the gathering in of His people and the accomplishment of the missionary motive. Let us note briefly three things about the covenant:

1. *The Time*. In the life of Abraham it was after he had been found faithful. See Nehemiah 9:7-8. In the history of redemption, it was the time of need for organization for the carrying out of the missionary motive of the promise.
2. *The Terms*. On the Godward side,
 - a. God to be the God of Abraham and his seed — a faithful God. To be God in a peculiar sense not for the sake of Abraham and the Jews alone, but for mankind, Galatians 3:29 — a missionary God, John 3:16.
 - b. Abraham to be a father of a multitude — many nations. They that are of faith are the children of Abraham.
 - c. An everlasting covenant — eternally operative — ever widening to reach all nations, Acts 2:39.

¹*The Prophets and the Promise*, W. J. Beecher, published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York. Used by permission.

- d. Family representation. One of the glories of divine grace is that it includes our children. Acts 2:39.

On the manward side,

- e. Obedience. "And God said unto Abraham, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations." Genesis 17:9. "Keep my covenant" — "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." What is the connection between these two verses?
3. *The Token* of the covenant — circumcision: It has been said that in the New Testament this sacrament was changed but not annulled, that is, there was no change in the ideas symbolized. "Circumcision . . . was changed — from the act symbolizing, from a prophetic stand-point, faith's longings and hopeful trust in divine power for cutting off the sins of the flesh — to the act of washing with water, symbolizing from a historic stand-point faith contemplating the divine power to regenerate and purify, given in the outpouring of the Spirit."² "Go ye therefore . . . baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

II. THE CONTROLLING TRAIT OF THE WITNESS — FAITH ISSUING IN OBEDIENCE.

Abraham had "implicit faith and instantaneous obedience." He had a faith in what was humanly impossible with respect to the birth of Isaac, and with respect to his being raised from the dead if necessary. In the sacrifice and restoration of Isaac did he not see a foreshadowing of the death and resurrection of Christ? We know that he had some conception of and faith in a Saviour to come since Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad," John 8:56. We know, too, that like Abel his name is high on the roll of heroes of faith, that they that are of faith are the children of Abraham, and that through this faith all the nations of the earth are to have the blessings of salvation.

Faith issuing in obedience appears to be the controlling trait in the life of this patriarchal witness. Real and indispensable on the part of the witness is his obedience to the revelation of God. Abraham, being human, does not have a record of perfect obedience, and when he disobeyed he suffered accordingly. At the same time obedience based on faith in the living God was a dominant note in his life. Listen to this note,

1. In his response to the *call* of God. "So Abraham went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him," Genesis 12:4. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed . . ." Hebrews 11:8. This meant separation,

²*Discourses of Redemption*, Stuart Robinson, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

beginning and continuing a life of separation. He was the father of a separated race.

2. In his response to the *covenant*. The clear command of God to him was, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations." God's immediate command in connection with this covenant was, "Every male among you shall be circumcised." Genesis 17:23 tells us Abraham did this very thing— instantaneous obedience. The keeping of this covenant involved in its far-reaching effects the obedience of the children. Abraham was careful to see to this, as evidenced by what God said about him in Genesis 18:19. The keeping of this covenant meant for Abraham and his children not permanent settlement, but patient sojourning. Read Hebrews 11:9-10.
3. In his response in time of supreme *crisis*. Read again "The oath-bound covenant" of Genesis 22:16-18, noting especially these words, "Thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son— thou hast obeyed my voice." And read God's promise to Isaac in Genesis 26:3-5, marking especially these words, "because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

Faith issuing in obedience was very real in the life and experience of Abraham. It meant a life of *separation, sojourning, sacrifice*. At the same time all of this was indispensable in God's plan and program for him. The same principle holds good for His witness today. Only a faith that controls the life can build the church.

III. HIS PRICELESS WITNESS IN THE HOME— THE HOME OF ABRAHAM AND SARAH.

"The Holy Spirit brings Abraham's faith in direct connection with his family life." Let us take a look at seven things told us about his home.

1. Its *Purpose*. The God-given purpose in the establishment of this home did not terminate in the personal happiness of Abraham and Sarah. They were blessed in order to be a blessing, and that blessing was to reach to the ends of the earth. God had a grand missionary purpose in the establishment of the home. He said to Abraham, "I will bless thee . . . be thou a blessing . . . In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." See Psalms 67:1-2.
2. Its *Princess*. Sarah, meaning "princess," was an appropriate name for Abraham's wife. She evidently was a woman of exceptional beauty, remaining so even past the age of sixty-five. She had remarkable physical strength, living to the good old age of 127. But

the best things to be said about Sarah are found in the New Testament. "By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised," Hebrews 11:11. "Sarah is evidently regarded in the closest union with Abraham. She was 'one with him.' Her faith was a condition for the fruitfulness of his faith."³ In Peter's first epistle he has a significant reference to Sarah. See I Peter 3:1-6.

3. Its *Bigamy*. This was more in keeping with Abraham's background of idolatry than with his new life of faith. The fact that it is even recorded that the handmaid, Hagar, became the secondary wife of Abraham, and that at the suggestion of Sarah, is an evidence of the truthfulness of sacred Scripture, its faithfulness in recording the sins even of its heroes. The fact of Abraham's bigamy is recorded, but not approved. The results are sufficient evidence of its wickedness in the sight of God—unhappiness, strife, sorrow, and the iniquity visited upon generations to come. So it is with every American home which violates the fundamental principles of chastity as laid down in the commandments of God.
4. Its *Worship*. The worship of God might be called the distinctive feature of the home of Abraham. In place after place where he lived he builded an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord—in Shechem, in Bethel, in Hebron. Then we have that wonderful story of the building of the altar on Mt. Moriah, where he and his son were to worship. It was from a home with an altar for the worship of God there went forth the father of the faithful, the friend of God, with the faith and the obedience which culminated in the gift of his son. It was such a home as this which made such an impression upon his son, and his son's son. Such a faith in the covenant-keeping God is evidenced in Isaac, as he too, at Beersheba builded an altar, and called upon the God of his father. Similar acts of worship were performed by Jacob at Shechem and at Bethel.
5. Its *Discipline*. Abraham was the head of that home. Peter tells us that Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. Not only this, but Abraham controlled his children and his household, directing them in the path of right. See Genesis 18:19.
6. Its *Hospitality*. It was a beautiful touch in the home-life of this couple when that day three angels visited them at their tent by the oaks of Mamre. Sarah made the cakes, and Abraham fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it to the servant to prepare, and give to the heavenly guests. And was not one of these guests the second person of the Trinity, even Jesus himself? If Jesus were to come

³The Epistle to the Hebrews, Westcott, published by Macmillan Co., New York. Used by permission.

in person today to our home would He receive a hearty welcome? Would He find there the Bible and prayer, gospel singing, Christian literature, Sabbath observance, and faithful attendance at all the services of the sanctuary? See Revelation 3:20.

7. Its *Child*. Observe the climactic feature of this home in Canaan — the presence of the covenant child, and the consecration of this child in that supreme act of worship. Abraham had stood the test of patience. Read Romans 4:20-21 and Hebrews 11:11-12. Now note well that supreme test of sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. Read Hebrews 11:17-19. Abraham spared not his son, and in this he presented a picture of God's giving his only begotten Son. Compare Genesis 22:16 and Romans 8:32.

"The gift of a son? Long ago it was done
When Abraham's faith the victory won.

The funeral pyre on mountain Moriah,
The wood on the altar laid ready for fire.

The little lad willing though tears his eyes filling,
Knife in the father's hand ready for killing.

The gift of a son? Oh, yes it was done,
Ten thousand times thousand the victory's won.

On the slope of Moriah; Midst earthquake and fire,
The Son of God died, in love, not in ire.

The gift of a son? Hallelujah, 'tis done,
The world's been redeemed, the victory's won."

—(Author unknown).

IV. HOW MAY I WITNESS MOST EFFECTIVELY IN THE HOME?

1. If in my home environment there is not vital Christianity, I must stand against the current, daily witnessing by "now Christian living."
2. In choosing my life-partner I must observe the teaching of Paul when he said, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness?" Your missionary has put under church discipline many a Korean Christian for marrying an unbeliever.
3. I must cultivate the spirit of the sojourner, giving first place not to the temporal, but to the eternal.
4. There must be mutual spiritual cooperation of husband and wife.
5. There must be the family altar. (Read "Cotter's Saturday Night" by Robert Burns, for excellent illustration.)

6. I must claim and keep the covenant promises with regard to the children.
7. I must cultivate the spirit of sacrifice.

"Give of thy sons to bear the message glorious;
Give of thy wealth to speed them on their way;
Pour out thy soul for them in prayer victorious;
And all thou spendest Jesus will repay."

"Thou and thy house." One morning a young Korean came into my study to see me before leaving for his home in the country. The occasion of his being in the city of Mokpo was our Bible Institute for men where he had just successfully completed his course of study. Less than a year before upon my visit to a little village church near his home he had been baptized — the only one from a large family. Some months later upon my return to the same village I had the privilege and joy of baptizing his father, his wife, and a sister, and receiving into the catechumenate his mother and grandmother, and hearing two of his sisters recite perfectly the child's catechism. This boy, about twenty years old, had been instrumental in leading his whole family to Jesus Christ; this is a present-day illustration of the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

A little later we had a most refreshing visit to this Korean home. Materially, it was hardly more than a hut of mud, with evidences of extreme poverty all around. Yet how rich in faith! The family altar had already been established. There were the happy faces of the three generations — all new believers, and like the Philippian jailor, the father was rejoicing greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

Teaching a Little Child to Pray. In his "Talks on Soul Winning" Dr. E. Y. Mullins, of sainted memory, closes his chapter on "Winning the Children" with the following paragraph:

"I cannot better close this chapter than by referring to a poem of Robert Browning, which portrays an angel who seems to be chained to a spot close to a tomb. The heavens above are opening, and hands beckon to the angel to come above; and out yonder in the distance great enterprises are in motion, calling to the angel to come and take part in them. But the angel is bending over some object at the tomb, and upon looking closer you discover that the task which holds the angel is this: He is teaching a little child to pray. The child with uplifted hands and bowed face is being instructed in the great duty of prayer. This task, to the angel who knows the eternal things, is greater than any earthly enterprise, and even greater than entering the open heavens above."⁴

⁴*Talks on Soul Winning*, E. Y. Mullins, published by Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn. Used by permission.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER THREE

Moses—Christ-Centered Witnessing Unto the Church.

I. THE MAN—A CHRIST-LIKE WITNESS.

1. Child of faith and child of the court.
2. Heart of compassion.
3. Choice revealing true sense of values.
4. Meek.
5. Faithful.
6. Close friendship and fellowship with God.
7. Intercessory prayer, Exodus 17:11; Psalms 106:23; Exodus 32:31-32.
8. Pointing away from self to Christ, Deuteronomy 18:15.
9. On Mount of Transfiguration.
10. Song of Moses and song of Lamb, Revelation 15:2-4.

II. HIS MESSAGE—ITS MESSIANIC HEART.

Successive divine revelations — The Burning Bush.

1. The Gospel of the Passover.
 - (1) The setting.
 - (2) The shadow and substance.
 - a. The lamb of the passover.
 - b. The sprinkling of the blood.
 - c. The centrality of the blood of the Lamb.
2. The Gospel at Sinai.

Provisions, basis, purpose, message, sealing, gospel.

 - (1) Missionary, I Peter 2:9.
 - (2) Evangelistic, Galatians 3:24.
 - (3) Evangelical, Matthew 26:28.

III. CROSS-CENTERED WITNESSING — A PARAMOUNT NEED TODAY.

1. The Need of the congregation and church, Romans 9:6; Romans 2:28; Galatians 6:15; John 8:39.
2. The Call for Witnessing within the Church.
 - (1) The Pentateuch.
 - (2) The Passover.
 - (3) The Prayer.

Quotations from two Moravian evangelists, and from prayer of Habakkuk.

CHAPTER THREE

Moses—Christ-Centered Witnessing Unto the Church.

THEME VERSES: Deuteronomy 18:15 and John 5:46

Assignment:

1. Read Acts 7:20-44 and Hebrews 11:23-28, looking up all marginal references.
2. Study above passages noting Christ-like characteristics of the man Moses.
3. Study above passages noting the central theme of the message received and delivered by Moses.
4. Study same scripture for the condition of the people to whom Moses witnessed.

INTRODUCTION

Our first study brought largely into view the chosen individual, the second study the chosen family. Now in this study there appears a larger society described by such expressions as "the people of God," "the congregation of Israel," "the church in the wilderness." On the one hand they are seen in their affliction and rebellion. On the other hand God is revealed providing for them deliverance, spiritual nurture, discipline, and growth in grace. In this gracious work we see God using the individual, Moses, for witnessing unto Israel.

I. THE MAN—A CHRIST-LIKE WITNESS.

1. Moses appears on the scene as a *child of faith* and a *child of the court*. By faith his parents saw possibilities even in the face of persecution. They had a courageous faith like that of the three Hebrew children of Daniel, and of Daniel himself. This faith must have greatly influenced the mind and heart of the child Moses, and the type of training his parents gave him. The fact that he was also a child of the court provided a providential training for his future career.
2. When he was grown it becomes evident that he had a *heart of compassion* for his people. He "looked on their burdens," and "it came into his heart to visit his brethren." This reminds us of the eye of

Jesus and the heart of Jesus when He saw the multitudes and was moved with compassion for them.

3. His *choice* of a life of faith rather than a life at the Egyptian court reveals his true sense of values. It is better to be identified with the people of God in persecution than with pagans in the pleasures of sin for a season. He chose the reproach of Christ rather than the riches of Egypt. "The reproach of Christ is the reproach which belongs to him who is the appointed envoy of God to a rebellious world."¹ See Romans 15:3. Some of us have seen in the museum at Cairo the King Tut collection worth millions and millions of dollars. And King Tut was not nearly so rich and powerful as was the Pharaoh of the time of Moses. Moses turned down his prospect for all this riches and power. He had an eye for the unseen.
4. "Now the man Moses was very *meek*, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth," Numbers 12:3. Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly in heart."
5. "And Moses was indeed *faithful* in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken; but Christ as a son, over his house," Hebrews 3:5-6a. This faithfulness was illustrated in his obedience to the pattern given him in the mount for the building of the tabernacle. It is said of him in this connection "Thus did Moses according to all that Jehovah commanded him, so did he," Exodus 40:16.
6. Perhaps the most characteristic trait of Moses was his *close friendship and fellowship with God*. "And Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," Exodus 33:11.
7. Moses experienced *intercessory prayer*. (1) For victory over his enemies. "And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed," Exodus 17:11. (2) For the deliverance of Israel. "Therefore he (God) said that he would destroy them (Israel), had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them," (Psalm 106:23). The classic illustration of the intercession of Moses for Israel is found in Exodus 32:31-32. Of this Dr. Edward Mack says,

"His tender intercession for them before Jehovah, 'if Thou wilt forgive their sin —; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book, which

¹ *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Westcott, published by Macmillan Co., New York. Used by permission.

Thou hast written,' remains as one of the notable waymarks of the Old Testament pilgrimage. It is life for life, his life given for his people, to win back life for them; an intimation, or a type, of the great Atonement. But Moses was not adequate for the great sacrifice, for he himself was a sinner, and not a lamb without spot or blemish. Therefore, his offer was passed over, and Jehovah said, 'Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out from my book.' Nevertheless, his noble offer yet stands as the clearest Old Testament type of Christ's voluntary sacrifice; and we can well understand how 'He began with Moses' to teach men of Himself."²

8. Moses, lawgiver and prophet, distant forerunner of the Prophet, was like the immediate forerunner, John the Baptist, in *pointing away from self to Christ*, his glory vanishing in the light of Christ's glory. What has been called the clearest promise of Christ in Moses is found in Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses says, "*Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.*"
9. On the *Mount of Transfiguration*, in the reflected glory of the transfigured Christ, Moses, the Christ-like witness, continues his witness, Christ-centered and cross-centered. "And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." We wonder if in this conversation Jesus might have illustrated the necessity of his death by saying, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life."
10. Finally, before the sacred canon closes, the name of Moses appears in connection with an account of the praises of the saints in heaven. They are those who are standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God, and they sing the *song of Moses*, the servant of God, and the *song of the Lamb*, Revelation 15:2-4. This heavenly song suggests the unity of the Old and New Testaments. Those who sing it are rejoicing in the unchanging, everlasting gospel of redeeming love.

"I love to tell the story, 'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story, Of Jesus and His love."

²*The Christ of the Old Testament*, Edward Mack, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

II. HIS MESSAGE—ITS MESSIANIC HEART.

The gospel "acorn" of Genesis 3:15, which appeared as "the vigorous sapling" to the faith of Abraham, is now in the time of Moses "the refreshing shade tree." Moses becomes the recipient of a number of special divine revelations. At the burning bush God revealed to him His saving purpose. Here God said, "I am come down to deliver them." The Messianic heart of the message is particularly revealed at the Passover in Egypt, and at Sinai.

1. *The Gospel of the Passover.* The first gospel came when our first parents were in a state of sin and misery. Genesis 3:15 was as a star of hope to them. The gospel first came to Abraham in a land of idols, and through God's successive revelations to him he was prepared to receive the covenant. Several hundred years pass. God is dealing now with the whole congregation of Israel in Egypt. They "sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage."

Let us take a look at the shadow and substance of the gospel proclaimed to them. First of all we think of the *lamb of the passover*. This points backward to the lamb provided for Abraham on Mt. Moriah as a substitute for his son, Isaac. And it may point still further backward to a sacrifice at the gates of Eden. It points forward to the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. The fact that it must be a spotless lamb foreshadows the sinless Christ, a life of thirty-three years without sin. Most prominent of all is the fact that the lamb was slain, presenting a prophetic view of Calvary. The apostle Peter says, "Ye were redeemed . . . with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."

A next view of the passover scene presents the *sprinkling of the blood*, which teaches the necessity of personal faith appropriating the gospel. There can be "safety only under the blood." There was death in every home that did not have the blood of the lamb sprinkled on its door post. By faith Moses instituted the passover, "and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the first-born should not touch them."

Through the blood of the lamb a whole nation was redeemed. No wonder that this passover was kept through the centuries as a memorial of such a deliverance. It was observed by Christ himself, followed by His institution of the Lord's Supper to take its place. The former gave the prophetic view of Christ crucified, the latter points backward to the historic fact of Christ crucified. The form of the sacrament was changed, but in each the same central truth is taught — *the centrality of the blood of the Lamb*.

"The whole gospel is, in fact, summed up just here . . . 'when I see the blood I will pass over.' . . . All hope of divine favor — all strength to resist and conquer sin — all power of a holy life comes from this blood. Is man redeemed? It is because 'we have redemption through his blood.' Are any ransomed from sin? 'Not by corruptible ransom of silver and gold' are they purchased, 'but by the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without spot.' Are these justified? 'Being justified by his blood.' Are these cleansed and made holy? 'His blood cleanseth from all sin.' Are they as strangers and wanderers from God restored? 'Ye who sometime were afar off are now made nigh by the blood of Christ.' Have they access to the Father's presence in prayer? It is because the High Priest hath gone before 'sprinkling the blood.' Are they arrayed in spotless robes to appear at the court of the Great King? 'They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Are sinners cast off at last to eternal death? It is because 'they have trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God.'"³

2. *The Gospel at Sinai.* The children of Israel had been suddenly transferred from Egypt to the base of Sinai. They were now the church in the wilderness. Here God makes a covenant with His people. See Exodus 19:4-6 for the *provisions* of this covenant. The *basis* of this covenant was the book of the law found in the heart of the book of Exodus. The *purpose* of this covenant was to provide "for spiritual nurture and growth in grace of the redeemed church." "Practically, it is to be considered in its two-fold character of a law to convict of sin, and a gospel to teach the pardon and justification of the sinner by faith, and that a faith which purifies the heart."³ Dr. Turnbull says that the *message* of this covenant is expressed in the words of Jehovah, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The pivotal point of this covenant is described in Exodus 24:1-8, the *sealing* of the covenant, with the climactic ceremony of the sprinkling of the blood. This brings us to the *gospel* of the covenant.

Usually Sinai is thought of as symbolizing law only, stern, severe commandments, not directly connected with the gospel. Yet it contains a *missionary, evangelistic, evangelical gospel*.

- (1) A provision of the covenant that Israel be a kingdom of priests is missionary in its character, Israel thus to be a channel of blessing to the world. Peter completes the idea when he says, "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, *that* ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," I Peter 2:9. Christian Witnessing!

³*Discourses of Redemption*, Stuart Robinson, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

- (2) The law itself is grounded on an evangelistic motive. Before the ten commandments were given God said, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." In this preface to the ten commandments is a direct reference to redemption. According to Paul was not evangelism included in the very purpose of the law? His reasoning in Galatians chapter three, is this: "So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, *that* we might be justified by faith," Galatians 3:24.
- (3) Finally, the gospel of Sinai is evangelical. It brings us to the heart of the gospel—the blood of the covenant. The words of Jesus at the institution of the Lord's Supper hark right back to the sealing of the covenant at Sinai. Jesus said, "For this is the blood of the covenant which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." The gospel at Sinai is in essence the gospel of Calvary. It is the only gospel to save a lost sinner, sanctify the believer, and restore fellowship with God. They are washed in the blood of the Lamb, *"therefore* are they before the throne of God."

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

III. CROSS-CENTERED WITNESSING UNTO THE CHURCH—A PARAMOUNT NEED TODAY.

1. *The Need of the Congregation and Church.*

In Romans 9:6 Paul says, "For they are not all Israel that are of Israel." The idea evidently is that they are not all Christians who are members of the church.

In Romans 2:28 the thought is similar. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly." "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," Galatians 6:15. A baptized church member does not necessarily mean a saved person.

In John 8:39 Jesus says, "If ye were Abraham's children ye would do the works of Abraham." Conduct must be consistent with confession. A real Christian must be a witnessing Christian.

With these scripture standards before us, well may there be a heart-searching of the membership of our church. There are so many inactive members. What a need there is for Spirit-filled witnessing unto the congregation of Israel, unto the church in the wilderness, unto the unsaved inside the church! One of the greatest spiritual awakenings of modern times, the great revival in Korea in 1907, began with the missionaries and within the Korean church.

2. *The Call for Witnessing within the Church.*

Think of the man Moses, his Christ-likeness; and his message, its Messianic heart, as a challenge to us today.

- (1) The *Pentateuch*—a continuing witness. Jesus said, "For if ye believed Moses ye would believe me, for *he wrote of me.*"
- (2) The *Passover*. "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ," I Corinthians 5:7b. Think of the silent witness of the Lord's Supper, *proclaiming the Lord's death 'til He come.*
- (3) Meditate upon the intercessory *Prayer* of Moses for Israel. With a burning and unselfish desire for the salvation of God's people such as Moses had, and such as the apostle Paul had, may each of us be enabled to say, "*My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.*" Am I a person who is "at ease in Zion" and "secure in the mountain of Samaria," or am I really "grieved for the affliction of Joseph"? (See Amos 6:1-6.) How much real concern have I for the non-attending church member—the lukewarm member?

The following paragraphs quoted from two outstanding Moravian evangelists are applicable, not only to the pulpit preacher, but also to the private Christian witness:

"A renewal of our days as of old involves a return to fervent prayer and to the earnest and effectual preaching of the remission of sins through the vicarious sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God."⁴

Count Zinzendorf, who exclaimed as his life's rule and motto, "I have one passion, it is Jesus, Jesus only," said the following:

"In order to preach aright, take three looks before every sermon; one at thine own sinfulness; another at the depth of human wretchedness all around thee; and a third at the love of God in Christ Jesus; so that empty of self, and full of compassion towards thy fellowmen, thou mayest be enabled to administer God's comfort to souls."⁴

O Jehovah, revive thy work in the midst of the years; In the midst of the years make it known; In wrath remember mercy, Habakkuk 3:2b.

⁴*Power from on High*, John Greenfield, published by The World Wide Revival Prayer Movement, Atlanta City, N. J. Used by permission.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER FOUR

David—The Singing Witness.

I. THE DOMINANT NOTE—THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

1. The Keynote — II Samuel 7:16. See Luke 1:32-33.
2. The Messianic Promise — Quotation from Beecher.
3. The Messiah as King.
4. The Effect of the Gospel of the kingdom upon David.
5. The Gospel of the Kingdom in the New Testament.

Nine characteristics of the Kingdom

- (1) A Spiritual Kingdom — John 3:5.
- (2) A Present Kingdom — Matthew 6:33.
- (3) A Coming Kingdom — Matthew 6:10.
- (4) A Kingdom not of this World — John 18:36.
- (5) A Kingdom established through the agency of the Church — Matthew 16:18-19.
- (6) A Kingdom for all Races — Matthew 8:11.
- (7) A Universal Kingdom — Matthew 28:19.
- (8) A Victorious Kingdom — John 12:32.
- (9) An Everlasting Kingdom — Luke 1:32-33.

II. SPEAKING IN PSALMS.

1. The influence of the Psalms.
2. The witness of the Messianic Psalms.

III. OUR LIVING KING — Psalm 110.

Introduction. General Observations.

1. His Coronation.
2. The Commencement of His Reign.
3. The Continued Conquests of His Reign.
4. The Cause of His Reign.
5. The Completion of the Footstool.

A suggested interpretation of the last verse.

IV. THE GOSPEL OF THE KING AND THE KINGDOM FOR TODAY.

1. The triumphant note — most timely.
2. The singing method — most effective.

Westminster Abbey and Korean village illustration.

CHAPTER FOUR

David—The Singing Witness.

THEME VERSES: II Samuel 7:16 and Colossians 3:16

Assignment:

1. Read II Samuel 7, looking out for a key-word found 15 times, and listen for the key-note sounded in this chapter.
2. Study the effect of this revelation upon David, and reasons therefor.
3. Read Psalm 110, looking up all marginal references to the New Testament.
4. Meditate upon the need of the gospel of the King and the Kingdom today.

INTRODUCTION

About 1,000 years before Christ, David, "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," the best loved of all the Hebrew kings, occupied the center of the stage. More space is given to his history than to any other Old Testament character. David is in the New Testament from the first verse of Matthew to the last chapter of Revelation.

Second Samuel, chapter 7, finds that David had been given rest from all his enemies. Jebus, the last stronghold of the Canaanites in the promised land, had been taken. The original covenant with Abraham to give Israel the land of Canaan was completely fulfilled. Under the leadership of King David the ark had been brought up to Jerusalem with great rejoicing, such as is pictured in Psalm 24. With David comfortably settled in his own palace he gives expression to his desire to build a temple for the worship of Jehovah. This in turn brought forth the statement from Jehovah that He would build David a house.

I. THE DOMINANT NOTE—THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

Second Samuel 7:16 sounds the keynote, the promise to David of an everlasting house and an eternally enduring kingdom: "*And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever.*" Read Luke 1:32-33 which tells of the coming of David's greater son, Jesus, King of kings, through whom this promise would be completely fulfilled.

In his book, "The Prophets and the Promise," Beecher says with reference to the Messianic Promise:

"Henceforth this Messianic doctrine, preached by the prophets, sung in the Psalms, built into the temple, rising with the smoke of every sacrifice, the quickener of Israel's conscience, the bulwark against idolatry, the protection of patriotism from despair, the comfort under affliction, the warning against temptation, the recall of the wandering . . . in short a doctrine of salvation offered to Israel and every Israelite; more than this, Israel's missionary call to the nations, inviting all without exception to turn to the service of Jehovah . . . is this doctrine of the promise of blessing, made to Abraham and Israel, renewed in David and his seed, to be eternally without recall, and including the human race in its scope."¹

Before the time of David the Messiah had been set forth largely in his office as Prophet and Priest. From this time forth, while the prophetic and priestly functions are none the less proclaimed, there is added the new feature of the Messiah as King. In his office as King he is to gather out of all nations and ages a great spiritual kingdom as a result of his prophetic and priestly work. It has been said that the keynote to which the harp of prophecy is attuned is sounded in these words, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom," Psalms 45:6.

When David first heard the gospel of the kingdom it called forth from him adoration and thanksgiving, and hope for the future. Note in Second Samuel, chapter 7, some reasons on David's side for such a response. With respect to the word of God he had the opened ear. (Verse 27, "revealed," "opened the ear.") With respect to the will of God he had the surrendered will; and with respect to the worship of God he had the praying heart. David prayed with humility, with Hallelujah, and with hope.

The first Christian preaching centered around the theme, "The Gospel of the Kingdom." Jesus taught the principles of the kingdom and the parables of the kingdom. His kingdom is

1. A Spiritual Kingdom — John 3:5.
2. A Present Kingdom — Matthew 6:33.
3. A Coming Kingdom — Matthew 6:10.
4. A Kingdom not of this World — John 18:36.
5. A Kingdom established through the agency of the Church — Matthew 16:18-19.
6. A Kingdom for all Races — Matthew 8:11.
7. A Universal Kingdom — Matthew 28:19.

¹*The Prophets and the Promise*, W. J. Beecher, published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York. Used by permission.

8. A Victorious Kingdom — John 12:32.

9. An Everlasting Kingdom — Luke 1:32-33

See "What is the Kingdom of God" by R. C. Reed.²

The apostle Paul preached the kingdom of God. John on the last page of sacred Scripture records the testimony of the King on His throne, who said, "I am the root and the offspring of David."

II. SPEAKING IN PSALMS.

The book of Psalms "contains the whole music of the heart of man, swept by the hand of His maker." Through the centuries the Psalms have mingled in national life, church life, family life, individual life, in Christian art, and have been the inspiration of countless hymns and poems. "To the singing of psalms the sails of the Mayflower were set to catch the winds that wafted the Pilgrim Fathers to the white sandbanks of Cape Cod; to their music were laid the foundations of the United States of America."³

Quite evident has been the influence of the Psalms on the lives of leaders in religion and literature. For instance, Psalm 32, probably written by David after he had confessed his great sin, was a favorite of St. Augustine, who before his death had it written on the wall of the room where he was sick. John Wesley, as he was approaching death, was heard repeating Psalm 46:7. His brother, Charles, the author of "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," also died with a Psalm. Add to the list such names as Scott, Tennyson, Browning, and Ruskin. Among the passages Ruskin learned by heart was Psalm 119, (176 verses). The witness of many a Scotch Covenanter was expressed in a Psalm. Time fails to tell of Brainard's Journal so permeated by thoughts from the Psalms. This Journal "fired the imagination of William Carey; it stirred the zeal of Henry Martyn; it inspired the decision of David Livingstone to become a missionary."³ Livingstone as a nine year old boy had won a prize for reciting the 119th Psalm. With Psalms 121 and 135 he bade farewell to his home and went to the heart of Africa. The text that sustained him in darkest Africa was Psalm 37:5. As a prisoner in Japan, Dr. Harry Myers was comforted by Psalm 103.

Especially helpful is the witness of the Messianic Psalms. For instance, Psalm 22, which foreshadows "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them"; Psalm 16, which points direct to the resurrection of Jesus; the "Royal Psalms," such as 2, 45, 72 and 110. Only eternity will tell the whole story of the singing witness, "speaking in psalms." "Praise ye the Lord."

²*What Is the Kingdom of God*, R. C. Reed, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

³*The Psalms in Human Life*, Prothero, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York. Used by permission.

III. OUR LIVING KING — Psalm 110.

This Psalm is most frequently quoted in the New Testament. It is used by Christ as recorded in three gospels, by Peter at Pentecost, and a number of times in Hebrews. Christ and Peter state emphatically that this is a Psalm of David, and treat it as purely Messianic. It is so full of gospel truths that it has been called David's creed. Luther said it was "worthy to be set in a frame of gold and diamonds." What a magnificent picture it gives us of our risen, living, mediatorial King! As we look at this "brief but weighty Psalm," as Augustine called it, may the Holy Spirit remove the veil from our eyes, that we may get a new glimpse of our King in His beauty.

1. *His Coronation*, verse 1. Here is a solemn, divine utterance. Jehovah "uttereth His oracle." It is addressed to David's Lord, a greater than David is here, even Jesus Christ, his greater Son. "Sit thou on my right hand" — invited to share God's throne.

- (1) The highest honor conceivable. The recipient must have the same nature as God himself. Such an honor as this can be given to God alone. The Deity of Christ is here stated.
- (2) Universal dominion. He is high above all principality and power and might and dominion.
- (3) The subjugation of his enemies promised. The crown was received and the footstool promised. "For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet."

2. *The Commencement of His Reign*, verse 2. Matthew Henry interprets "rod of his strength" to mean the everlasting gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit along with it. The first act after the coronation was to send the Holy Spirit into the world, thus fulfilling the promise made to the disciples. "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear," Acts 2:33.

His reign begins even in the midst of his enemies. The world today is beset by enemies of the King. The Spirit of the living, glorified Christ is more powerful than all the forces of Satan.

3. *The Continued Conquests of His Reign*, verse 3.

- (1) The Time. "The day of thy power."
"Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day."
- (2) The Consecration of His People. "Thy people are free-will offerings."
- (3) The Clothes of His People. "In holy array" — "in the beauty of holiness."

- (4) The Countless Number of His People. The army of the King seems to be compared with the dew. Among emblematic uses of the dew one is that of countless number. So the number of the host of the King is innumerable.

Do we today have doubt, discouragement, despair? Then let us look at the King who has supreme dominion, the rod of whose strength has been sent forth from Zion, whose Church militant is going forward in this the day of His power, with the conquering King as its Head.

4. *The Cause of His Reign*, verse 4.

While the divine nature of Christ is the necessary condition of his kingship and dominion (see verse 1), there is the immediate ground of the God-man being invested with this dominion. And lest we fail to realize the absolute necessity of this immediate cause of his kingship, there comes forth in verse 4, a second, solemn, divine oracle:

"Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

The atoning work of the priest was the ground of his exaltation to the throne — "when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." By becoming the right kind of priest, and by offering the right kind of sacrifice he sat down on the right hand of God.

(1) *His Priesthood.*

- a. Exalted dignity. "Because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor."
- b. Eternal duration. "He abideth forever."
- c. Unchangeable. Non-transferable. "Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

(2) *His Sacrifice.*

The most sublime act of worship and devotion was when this High Priest offered himself, the very Son of God, as a sacrifice for sin. He made his soul an offering for sin. We look back to the cross, therefore, the central fact of all Christianity, to answer all questions as to the right of the great High Priest to sit upon the throne of God and to exercise universal dominion, and to make intercession for us at the court of heaven.

5. *The Completion of the Footstool*, verses 5-6.

These two verses seem to project us into the future to the time of the completion of the footstool. Hence the activity is represented as taking

place in "the day of Jehovah's wrath," in contrast to the day of the king's army of the first section. In these verses we see Him as the conquering King and continuing Priest. His enemies are being put in subjection. There is the destruction of the kings, a vivid picture of judgment upon the wicked. See the universal judgment of the nations and the slain of the battlefield. Does the last part of verse 6 refer to the destruction of the leading antagonist of the Messiah, namely the antichrist? Then the footstool is completed. Compare Revelation 19:11-16. Does not this Psalm sound the chord for the Hallelujah Chorus of the last book in the Bible?

Listen to the beauty, and observe the effect of the last verse of this Psalm. As of other parts of the Psalm, interpretations vary. We refer you to Alexander Maclaren, who says, "May there not be here a certain desertion of the order of sequence, so that we are carried back to the time prior to the enthronement of the king? One is tempted to suggest the possibility of this closing verse being a full parallel with Philippians 2:7-9. Christ on the way to his throne drank of 'the waters of affliction,' and precisely therefore he is highly exalted."⁴ Humiliation is followed by exaltation. The last note of this Royal Psalm seems to have this message for us today — Do not forget the grand reason for the universal dominion and matchless glory of the King. Look to the cross

"Tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

IV. THE GOSPEL OF THE KING AND THE KINGDOM FOR TODAY.

The triumphant note of this witness is most timely for today.

"Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and *He is on the throne.*"

Most effective today is the method of the singing witness. The apostle Paul, who with his companion in prison at midnight not only prayed, but also sang hymns which were heard by the prisoners, has written this exhortation: "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.*"

On a visit to Westminster Abbey, among the many spots of historic interest shown us was the place where for generations the kings and the queens of the great British Empire have received their crowns. Beautiful and impressive as were the furnishings, there was an inscription on the wall that particularly attracted my attention. As I recall it was immediately under the painting "The Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci. It contained the words of

⁴The Psalms, Vol. III in Expositor's Bible, Alexander Maclaren

Scripture for the eyes of the sovereign to rest upon as he receives the crown of the kingdom, upon whose dominion the sun never sets. These are the words from the King James version:

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

From this royal spot in this great metropolis let me take you quickly to far away Korea, to a little village by the sea, in one of the most remote sections of my evangelistic field. I want you there with me to listen to a singing witness of the King of kings. Some months ahead of me there had gone to this village a colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who had sold to the natives some portions of Scripture. He had reported to me that they wanted to learn more about Jesus. We sent a native evangelist to the place, who had done some work of teaching and preaching before my visit. I well remember the day of my arrival. What a curiosity I was to the villagers, who cordially welcomed me, and directed me to my stopping place. It seemed as if literally "the whole village gathered at the door." We had a public gospel meeting that night. The next morning about breakfast time, I was having a little time for rest and quiet. All of a sudden I heard a child's voice singing. Then I located the singer. She was down in one of the muddy, filthy, narrow alleys, between the huts that were thatched with straw. I recognized the tune of her song. In the midst of that heathen village, out of the mud, and flies, and filth, came the clear notes of the Korean translation of that grand hymn of the church:

"Hark! ten thousand harps and voices
Sound the note of praise above;
Jesus reigns, and heav'n rejoices,
Jesus reigns, the God of love;
See, He sits on yonder throne;
Jesus rules the world alone.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen."

Think what it would mean if the Christian church would simply put this song and its message into the hearts and voices of the little children all over the world! Wars would cease to the ends of the earth, and the prophecy of the inscription there in Westminster Abbey would be hastened to fulfillment.

"We've a song to be sung to the nations,
That shall lift their hearts to the Lord;
A song that shall conquer evil
And shatter the spear and sword.

"For the darkness shall turn to dawning,
And the dawning to noonday bright,
And Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,
The kingdom of Love and Light."

OUTLINE OF CHAPTER FIVE

Isaiah — A Witness With a Vision.

I. ISAIAH'S VISION AND COMMISSION — Isaiah, Chapter Six.

1. A Vision of Glory.
2. A Voice of Guilt.
3. A Visit of Grace.
4. The Divine Voice and the Dedicated Volunteer.

II. THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH — Isaiah 52:13, 53:12.

Introduction.

1. The Servant Lifted Up — John 12:32.
2. Humiliated — John 1:11.
3. "Not for Himself but for Us" — II Corinthians 5:21.
4. Sufferings in detail, death and burial — I Peter 2:23-24.
5. Living and Victorious — Luke 24:46.

Summary: By expressions from the Psalm itself.

By verses from the New Testament.

By other arresting words of Scripture.

III. PRACTICAL APPLICATION — SALVATION FULLY AND FREELY OFFERED — Isaiah, chapter 55.

Introductory statement from "Great Chapters of the Bible" by Campbell Morgan.

1. The blessings are freely offered to the needy, verse 1.
2. This salvation is satisfying and sure, verses 2-3.
3. It will be given successfully to all the nations, verses 4-5.
God so loved **THE WORLD**.
The calling of the Gentiles — their eager response — the reason.
4. The acceptance of this offer is urgent, verse 6.
5. It is a call not only to faith, but also to repentance, in view of God's infinite mercy and readiness to pardon, verses 7-9.
6. This word of God effectively operates, verses 10-11.
7. The results of His power are glorious, verses 12-13.

Isaiah challenges the church to world-wide witnessing.

Conclusion: Hebrews 12:1-2.

CHAPTER FIVE

Isaiah—A Witness With a Vision.

THEME VERSES: Isaiah 53:12, last part; John 12:41

Assignment:

1. Read Isaiah, chapters 6, 53 and 55 looking out for connecting thoughts.
2. Read again chapter 6 for the definite steps in the movement of the chapter.
3. Read again chapter 53 looking up all marginal references to the New Testament.
4. Summarize the content of chapter 55 in seven concise sentences.

INTRODUCTION

The Man. Little is known of Isaiah's personal history. His name means "Jehovah saves," suggestive of the grand theme which characterizes his prophecy. He was probably born, reared, and educated in Jerusalem, belonging to a family of high rank.

That outstanding personal experience of his life, his call and commission, was evidently a pivotal point in his life, a glorious preparation for his mighty task, without which we would not have his matchless prophecy. He has been called "the king of the prophets," "the fifth evangelist," "the St. Paul of the Old Testament."

Tradition has it that he was martyred during the reign of Manasseh, his body being sawn asunder. Some think that reference is made to the manner of his death in the expression, "they were sawn asunder" in Hebrews 11.

The Times. Isaiah lived about 250 years after David and 750 years before Christ. "The whole world was in upheaval, very much as in our own time. Many nations were seeking better places for themselves in the sun, and fighting also to make their national gods supreme on earth. Isaiah's land and kings were caught in this restless and ambitious surging of the peoples."¹ The historical background is given in II Kings chapters 15-20, II Chronicles 26-32, and Isaiah 36-39.

The Book. It is essentially a vision. "What eye could not see, nor ear hear, neither could enter into the imagination of man, God has revealed to us by his Spirit through Isaiah."¹ Christ and the New Testament writers quote

¹*The Christ of the Old Testament*, by Edward Mack, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

this prophet more frequently than any other, and the apostle John, after repeated quotations from Isaiah, said, "*These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him.*"

Isaiah is one of the greatest of all books on world missions. Two theme words in its message are judgment and peace (Morgan's Analyzed Bible). Judgment is pronounced upon the world of the wicked, and peace is promised to the true worshippers of Jehovah, perfect peace to the steadfast mind who trusts in Him. The price of this peace was the sacrifice in our stead of the Messiah, The Suffering Servant of Jehovah, "The greatest thought in the Old Testament."

"Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on solid earth, with his heart in things of eternity and with his mouth and hand in things of time, with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in a very definite moment of history."²

I. ISAIAH'S VISION AND COMMISSION — Isaiah, Chapter Six.

1. *A Vision of Glory*, verses 1-4.

(1) The Date of the Vision. See II Chronicles 26:21-23 for reference to Uzziah's leprosy and death.

(2) Attendant Parts of this Vision of Glory.

- a. Throne of

{	glory, calls for worship, government, calls for obedience, grace, to which we may come with boldness. (M. Henry)
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- b. Train — skirts, robes.
- c. Temple — Compare Revelation 4:2-3.
- d. Seraphim — burning spirits, or angels of fire. It has been suggested that two wings represent humility, two reverence, and two work — executing God's will.
- e. Songs — antiphonal — adoration. The keynote of the vision is HOLINESS. "Glory is the expression of holiness." (G. A. Smith.)
- f. Shaking of the foundations of the threshold — producing terror and awe.
- g. Smoke filling the house. Smoke of incense? Symbol of God's glory?

²Quoted from Valeton in *The Book of Isaiah*, by G. L. Robinson, published by Association Press, New York. Used by permission.

- (3) The Central Object of the Vision. Contrast "the leper's grave and the loftiness of the Lord."

"Saw the Lord"—Compare John 1:18; Exodus 33:20; Matthew 5:8; Genesis 32:30.

"Although his essence is and must be invisible, he may be seen in the manifestation of his glory or in human form. . . . In John 12:41 it is said to have been Christ's glory that Isaiah saw and spoke of, while Paul cites Isaiah 6:9-10 (Acts 28:25-26) as the language of the Holy Ghost."³

A vision of the Triune God is essential to effective witnessing

2. *A Voice of Guilt*, Isaiah 6:5.

Immediately following the vision of glory came the sense of sin, like that of Gideon, Judges 6:22; Manoah, Judges 13:22; Job, Job 42:5-6; Daniel, Daniel 10; Peter, Luke 5:8; and John, Revelation 1:17. Isaiah was undone, unclean. While holy angels with pure lips were praising God, he had unclean lips, and was a part of a people with unclean lips. See Isaiah 3:8. Did he think particularly of the leper king, Uzziah? On the other hand his eyes had seen *the King*, Jehovah of hosts. *A consciousness of sin is necessary for witnessing.*

3. *A Visit of Grace*, Isaiah 6:6-7.

One of the seraphim was the ministering spirit bringing the live coal from off the altar. Fire is a symbol of purification. See Malachi 3:2-3 and Matthew 3:11. There were tongues of fire at Pentecost. The mouth of Isaiah was touched—preparation for witnessing! Jehovah touched Jeremiah's mouth and Daniel's lips. "The mention of the altar and the assurance of forgiveness, or rather of atonement, makes it natural to take the application of fire as a symbol of expiation by sacrifice."³

Compare Isaiah 53:5, 6, 11; I John 1:7. *There must be a visit of grace to prepare a witness to speak for the Lord.* See John 12:41.

4. *The Divine Voice and the Dedicated Volunteer*, Isaiah 6:8-13.

- (1) The call of the Triune God. God does the calling and the sending. See Acts 13:2-4.
- (2) The witness does the answering and the going. The assurance of sins forgiven is followed by willingness to do God's will. See Psalm 51:12-15.

³ *Isaiah*, Vol. I, J. A. Alexander.

- (3) The commission, verses 9-10. The commission, together with predictions in the form of commands as to the result of this preaching, is found with slight variations six times in the New Testament. Study them in their setting. (Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Romans 11:8.) *The prophet's first duty is to do the preaching God bids him, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear."* In this case he is commissioned to a service of hardening. The people will be spiritually deafened, and spiritually blinded through his speaking.

"What God expresses to Isaiah so imperatively as almost to take our breath away; what Christ uttered with such abruptness that we ask, does He speak in irony? What Paul laid down as the conviction of a long and patient ministry, is the great truth that the Word of God has not only a saving power, but that even in its gentlest pleadings and its purest Gospel, even by the mouth of Him who came, not to condemn, but to save the world, it has a power that is judicial and condemnatory."⁴

"And this is the judgment that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil," John 3:19.

- (4) Its continuance — how long? Two thoughts stand out in answer.

a. Ruin, verses 11-12. "Until . . . utterly waste." This may be applied to repeated desolations which illustrate the *reality of Divine vengeance*.

b. Remnant. Here is that characteristic, glorious teaching of Isaiah — *the redemption of the remnant*. The trees here mentioned have "the property of renewing themselves again from the root-stump, even when their trunk has been felled." (Delitzsch). In this verse we have "an outline of the history of Israel to the end of time."

"Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Romans 11:5.

What an encouragement to Christian witnessing!

II. THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH — Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

In these fifteen verses we have what is generally considered the greatest portion of Old Testament Scripture.

⁴*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. I, G. A. Smith, published by Harper & Brothers, New York. Used by permission.

Campbell Morgan points out that every New Testament writer, with the exception of James and Jude, refers to one particular paragraph of this passage, and links it with the story of Jesus. What a group of concurring witnesses!

Delitzsch says, "This whole passage looks as if it might have been written beneath the Cross on Golgotha.

There are five strophes to this "Psalm of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah."⁵

1. *The Servant lifted up*, Isaiah 52:13-15. Dr. Mack closely links verse 13 with John 12:32. Verse 14 should be read with verse 15. The general thought seems to be "humiliation, wherefore exaltation." See Philippians 2:6-11. Note how the apostle Paul in Romans 15:21 applies the last of verse 15 to the preaching of the gospel to those who have never heard it.
2. *Humiliated*, Isaiah 53:1-3. Compare John 1:11. See the use John and Paul make of verse 1 in John 12:38 and Romans 10:16-17.

Not only the report of Jesus was rejected, but also his person. The second part of the great oratorio, "The Messiah," opens with verse three, "He was despised and rejected of men . . ." We are told that at this point in its composition, Handel, its famous composer, was found with his head upon the table, weeping.

3. *"Not for Himself, but for us,"* Isaiah 53:4-6. The heart of the meaning of the sufferings of Christ is here reached. See I Corinthians 15:3 and II Corinthians 5:21.

In verse 4 the meaning of the Messiah's sufferings is stated, the misunderstanding about them being acknowledged.

Note in verse 5 the cause, the character, and the consequences of His suffering.

Verse 6 tells much of human sin and of divine grace greater than all our sin. It begins with a great confession, and closes with a God-given provision. It tells us that sin is universal, personal, individual. The effect of sin is illustrated and described. The way of escape is presented.

Read verses 4-6 noting the contrasts in the first and third personal pronouns.

⁵*Christ of the Old Testament*, Edward Mack, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

4. *Sufferings in detail, death and burial*, Isaiah 53:7-10a.

The silent Substitute — the sinless Sufferer. (See I Peter 2:23-24.)

Verse 7 — Silent, willing submission to severest sufferings. Philip, the evangelist, beginning from this Scripture, preached unto the Ethiopian, Jesus. The eunuch found his Saviour, was baptized, and went on his way rejoicing.

Verse 8 — Trial scene and termination. The trial was characterized by lawlessness and injustice. His generation was characterized by ignorance and indifference as to the meaning of His death, that it was the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the transgression of His people.

Verse 9 — The apostle Paul may have had this verse in mind when he wrote I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Verse 8 emphasizes the part lawless men had in the sufferings of the Messiah. Verse 10a gives the Godward side. God so loved that He gave.

5. *Living and victorious*, Isaiah 53:10b-12. See Luke 24:46.

From the heart of verse 10 through the last stanza of this Psalm, the dominant note is that of a glorious triumph. For the Servant of Jehovah, it is through suffering to glory.

Following His sufferings look at some of His glories:

- (1) He shall see his seed — a redeemed church.
- (2) He shall prolong his days — an endless life.
- (3) The pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand — in the hand of Christ all of God's gracious and glorious purposes are sure of fulfillment.
- (4) Satisfaction. "Successful advance of divine work of salvation."

(Delitzsch)

"We also find in these verses the primary source of Paul's theology of redemption. If one should launch his canoe into the wide stream of the Letter to the Romans, and make his way upstream, seeking the source of the great tide of truth, his journey would at last bring him to these words of Isaiah, 'by His knowledge shall my Servant, the Righteous One, justify (that is, make righteous) many.' The reason or ground for this righteousness of which He is the efficient cause for many is added in the very following clause: for 'He shall (or

must) bear their iniquities.' For Paul, and his fellow apostles and missionaries, all Old Testament law was fulfilled, and all prophetic hope realized, in Jesus Christ."⁶

- (5) Victorious dominion — Because of His suffering and shame. "Yet he bare the sin of many, and maketh intercession for the transgressors." Atonement and intercession — His completed and continuing work. As suggested by Dr. Mack, the most adequate comment on this epilogue is Romans 8:34.

For a summary of the movement of this Psalm read together the following expressions: "Lifted up" — "Rejected of men" — "But he was wounded for our transgressions" — "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him" — "Yet he bare the sin of many, and maketh intercession for the transgressors."

For this movement expressed in New Testament language read together John 12:32; John 1:11; I Corinthians 15:3; I Peter 2:23-24; Luke 24:46; Romans 8:34.

"BEHOLD, MY SERVANT!" — Isaiah 52:13.

"BEHOLD, THE MAN!" — John 19:5.

"BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD!" — John 1:36.

"BEHOLD, YOUR KING!" — John 19:14.

III. PRACTICAL APPLICATION — SALVATION FULLY AND FREELY OFFERED — Isaiah 55.

Dr. Campbell Morgan says of Isaiah 55, "Its structure is that of first setting forth the conditions of the wilderness or the desert (verses 1, 2); finally describing conditions in the Garden of God (verses 10-13); while between these is found an argued appeal, setting forth the way out of the desert, and into the garden (verses 3-9)."⁷

1. The blessings are freely offered to the needy — Isaiah 55:1.

Note 1) The authority of this offer — God himself.

2) The importance of this offer — Ho!

3) The universality of this offer — everyone.

4) The occasion of this offer — needy condition, spiritual longing.

⁶*The Christ of the Old Testament*, Edward Mack, published by Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va. Used by permission.

⁷*Great Chapters of the Bible*, Campbell Morgan, published by Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. Used by permission.

- 5) The condition of this offer — come, buy, eat — accept by faith.
 - 6) The freeness of this offer — price already paid, I Peter 1:19.
 - 7) The provision of this offer — life, revival, refreshment, nourishment.
2. This salvation is satisfying and sure, Isaiah 55:2-3.
Contrast that which is "not bread," Jeremiah 2:13; Luke 15:15-16; with "that which is good," Psalm 23:5-6, Luke 15:22-23. The most commonly accepted explanation of the expression "the sure mercies of David" is that it means "the mercies promised to him with particular reference to II Samuel 7:8-16."
 3. It will be given successfully to all the nations, Isaiah 55:4-5.
While some interpret "him" to refer to David, son of Jesse, the view we prefer is that it refers to Jesus, son of David, and the emphasis here is to his being Saviour of the Gentiles as well as Jews, "the peoples" being emphatic. *Jesus was God's gift to the world*, John 3:16. Verse 5 seems to be God's direct address to the Messiah, in which He prophesies *the calling of the Gentiles, their eager response, and the reason therefor*.
 4. The acceptance of this offer is urgent, Isaiah 55:6.
Note in verses 1-6 the various words or figures used for the exercise of faith, such as "come," "hear," "seek," "call," and compare them with the New Testament invitations.
 5. It is a call not only to faith, but also to repentance, in view of God's infinite mercy, and readiness to pardon, Isaiah 55:7-9. "Verse seven may be described as the wicket gate through which men pass from the desert to the garden. It is so marvelously and simply hung that the weakest and most paralysed hand touching it, it swings toward the garden, but that wicket gate is hinged on Calvary's cross." ⁸
Verse 9 illustrates a leading thought of the context, that of God's infinite mercy and willingness to abundantly pardon the penitent sinner. In this God is infinitely different from man.
 6. The word of God effectively operates, Isaiah 55:10-11.
Verses 10-11 contain a most beautiful comparison and a most pointed application. Just as God accomplishes His purposes in His works of nature, so does He in His word. See Romans 10:17; I Thessalonians 2:13; John 12:48.
 7. The results of His power are glorious, Isaiah 55:12-13.
As is characteristic of Isaiah, nature is here represented as rejoicing

⁸ *Great Chapters of the Bible*, Campbell Morgan, published by Fleming H. Revell, New York. Used by permission.

in the blessings of God's people. Deliverance from the bondage of Satan will bring to the redeemed church of Christ fullness of joy and perfect peace.

ISAIAH CHALLENGES THE CHURCH TO WORLD-WIDE WITNESSING.

Isaiah, having had a vision of the Lord of glory, and a vision of the heart of the gospel of salvation to be fully and freely offered, challenges us with a global vision of a glorious church. Take a look at this vision as expanded in chapter 60. See in it the dawning of the light, the drawing to the light, the dedication to this light, and the delight of an unending perfect day. In order that this vision may be realized the church must arise, and shine. She is the center and possessor of this light.

The power of attraction and radiation must continue increasingly. "Out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues," Revelation 7:9, they must come. "And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof," Revelation 21:24a.

To our church today comes the call of God through the prophet saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. . . . And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," Isaiah 60:1-3. "For Jehovah will be thine everlasting light . . ." Isaiah 60:20b.

These things said Isaiah, because he saw His glory; and he spake of Him.

CONCLUSION

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God," Hebrews 12:1-2, A. R. V.¹

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FOR USE IN TWELVE PERIODS

If it is desired that this course be taken in twelve periods instead of five, the following studies are suggested:

FIRST STUDY — Chapter One, I-III.

SECOND STUDY — Chapter One, IV-VI.

THIRD STUDY — Chapter Two, from beginning through II.

FOURTH STUDY — Chapter Two, III-IV.

FIFTH STUDY — Chapter Three, from beginning through I.

SIXTH STUDY — Chapter Three, from II to end of chapter.

SEVENTH STUDY — Chapter Four, from beginning through II.

EIGHTH STUDY — Chapter Four, from III to end of chapter.

NINTH STUDY — Chapter Five, from beginning through I.

TENTH STUDY — Chapter Five, II.

ELEVENTH STUDY — Chapter Five, III and Conclusion.

TWELFTH STUDY — Review the word of the cross as found in each of the five chapters.