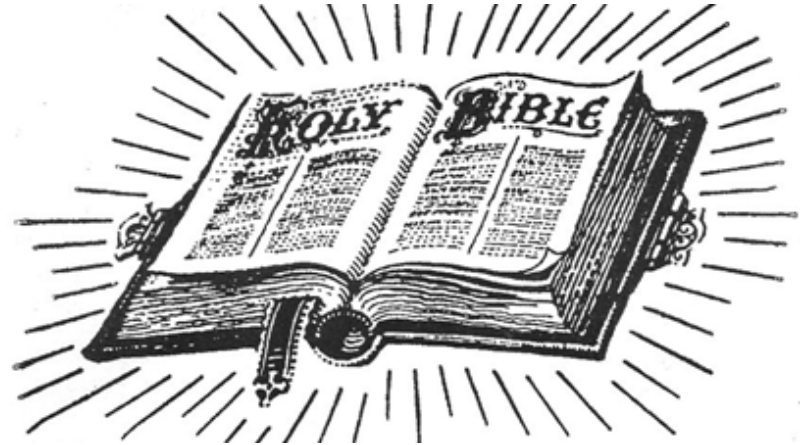


Bible Lessons



**“Thy name, O LORD, endureth for ever; and thy
memorial, O LORD, throughout all
generations.”**

Psalm 135:13

**Volume 51, No 1
January • February • March
2019**

Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Volume 51

January • February • March

No 1

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Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of Jesus Christ and His Church
Bible Lessons written by Sis. Angela Gellenbeck
In this issue: *Reflections* contributed by
Bro. Harlan Sorrell, Bro. James Bell, Sis. LaDawna Adams, Bro. Darrell
Johnson, and Bro. Bob Wilson

NOTICE

The Bible Lessons are published by
CHURCH OF GOD TODAY **Phone: (859) 319-9721. (Please leave text
or voice message.)** Lessons are available free of charge online at
<churchofgodtoday.com> and can be downloaded for printing in
booklet or other format.

Website editor: Angela Gellenbeck

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Bro. Edgar Martens, 2200 Edwards Avenue, Muscle Shoals, AL 35661
Phone (318) 402-9592

Note of Clarification

In two lessons in the **2018 4th Quarter Issue, The Church of God in Prophecy** (November 11, 2018 - *Promises of Comfort To Zion* and November 18, 2018 - *The Glory of the Church Foretold*), the desolate woman was described as being the harlot Babylon, who converts souls by ungodly means. We found this is not consistent with Galatians 4:27, where the barren, desolate woman is shown by the Apostle to be the true Jerusalem, who is the mother of us all. She had been spiritually desolate and barren as a literal, earthly city, but as the city of God and the bride of Christ she is no longer barren, but has souls, both Jews and Gentiles, born into her. Please note this discrepancy to your class and clarify the true definition.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

THEME FOR BIBLE LESSONS FOR FIRST QUARTER, 2019

NAMES OF **JEHOVAH**

Greetings in this brand new year! I trust your soul will be filled with fresh enthusiasm and renewed courage as we start a brand new study together. As I prepared for this quarter I felt like I had been given a special, surprise gift. The inspiration was to take a closer look at how God has revealed Himself to His people by manifesting different aspects of His Name in and through the various circumstances of life. What I discovered made me weep with joy!

I pray that as you study each lesson your love and admiration for our wonderful Jehovah God will increase and your faith will soar as you too discover the amazing truths contained in His Name.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

JANUARY 6, 2019

JEHOVAH ELOHIM—THE GOD OF GODS AND LORD OF LORDS

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Exodus 34:5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Deuteronomy 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

I Timothy 6:14 That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:

15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;

16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

MEMORY VERSE: Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. —Acts 2:36

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jehovah Elohim of creation, the El Shaddai of the patriarchs; and the I AM THAT I AM of the Israelites is the same Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament and is eternally Lord of lords and King of kings.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 2:7 “LORD God”: “Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures two chief names are used for the one true divine Being—ELOHIM, commonly translated God in our version, and JEHOVAH, translated

the newspaper. Minutes later, he was startled by a thudding sound. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window.

“But when he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

“Quickly, he put on a coat and galoshes and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs and sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted, wide-open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow.

“He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn. And then, he realized, that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me—that I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how, because any move he made tended to frighten and confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

“‘If only I could be a bird,’ he thought to himself, ‘and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to the safe, warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand.’

“At that moment, the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells—listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow.”

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

have seen how each name reveals something to us about the character of our God. We have been amazed at how each one points directly to Jesus Christ, and stand in awe at how the truth of each name is personally applied to us by the cross of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told His disciple Philip, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). Our studies have revealed the character of the Father and how they are personified by the Son. And there you have it: the Father is revealed by the Son, and when we are given a revelation of the character of the Father, we can clearly see the Son.

He is Immanuel. He is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He is salvation. Redeemer. Arm of the Lord. Savior.

He is the Living Word, Light of the World, Master, Bridegroom, Friend, Great Physician, Good Shepherd.

He is Messiah; Jeshua—Jehovah is my Salvation; HE IS LORD!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

When I reflect on the name Immanuel and the magnitude of what it means, my heart is melted before the Lord. Think of it—God with us!

This reminds me of a story I heard told by Paul Harvey years ago:

“Now the man to whom I’m going to introduce you was not a scrooge. He was a kind, decent, mostly good man, generous to his family and upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn’t believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn’t make sense, and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn’t swallow the Jesus story, about God coming to earth as a man.

“I’m truly sorry to distress you,’ he told his wife, ‘but I’m not going with you to church this Christmas Eve.’ He said he’d feel like a hypocrite and that he’d much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed, and they went to the midnight service.

“Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read

LORD. Elohim is the plural of Eloah (in Arabic *Allah*); it is often used in the short form EL (a word signifying strength), as in EL-SHADDAI, *God Almighty*, the name by which God was specially known to the patriarchs...” (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*).

Exodus 3:14 “I AM THAT I AM”: “A name that denotes what he is in himself, I AM THAT I AM. This explains his name Jehovah, and signifies, 1. That he is self-existent: he has his being of himself. 2. That he is eternal and unchangeable, and always the same, yesterday, today, and forever. 3. That he is incomprehensible; we cannot by searching find him out: this name checks all bold and curious inquiries concerning God. 4. That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature; ‘Let Israel know this, I AM hath sent me unto you. I am, and there is none else besides me.’ All else have their being from God, and are wholly dependent upon him. Also, here is a name that denotes what God is to his people” (*Matthew Henry Commentary*).

Deuteronomy 10:17 “Lord”: Adhonai; from Hebrew *adon*; one possessed of absolute control. “This name belongs to God by preeminence; and in this sense ought never to be given to any creature. Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, the Son of God, and equal with the Father, is often called Lord in Scripture, especially in the writing of Paul. The word LORD, in the English Bible, when printed in small capitals, stands always for JEHOVAH in the Hebrew” (*ATS Bible Dictionary*). “The Jews took seriously the third commandment ‘Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain’ (Exodus 20:7) and so, to keep from speaking the holy name carelessly, around 300 B. C. they decided not to pronounce it at all; but whenever in reading they came to it they spoke the word *adhonai* which means ‘Lord.’ Consequently in the KJV, LORD occurs instead of Jehovah, whereas ASV renders the name ‘Jehovah’” (*Zondervan’s Pictorial Bible Dictionary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND

As expressed in Word Definitions, the *LORD God* is the name used for the creator God from the beginning. When He appeared to Moses at the burning bush, He identified Himself as the God (Elohim) of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and when Moses asked by what name

he should announce Him to the children of Israel, He told him, “I AM THAT I AM,” meaning that Jehovah Elohim was the same one who was now addressing Moses; I AM coming from the infinitive “to be”—the self-existent One. Adonay, or Adonai, meaning *Lord*, is also the title given to God in the Old Testament, and was translated “kurios” by the *Septuagint* (Greek) writers. In the New Testament, *Kurios* is the name used in the title given to Jesus Christ.

When Jehovah wrote, for the second time, the Ten Commandments upon two new tables of stone, He descended unto Moses on the mountain and passed by him, proclaiming and describing the character of the name of the Lord (Exodus 34:5-7). Moses, recalling this event in Deuteronomy, again described the Lord of Lords and the God of gods.

Paul wrote to Timothy a description of the Lord Jesus Christ, calling Him the King of kings and Lord of Lords. In the series of visions John saw while on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus was once again proclaimed to be the King of kings and Lord of Lords. He was also given these titles: Faithful and True and the Word of God.

Peter, preaching to the crowd of Jews on the day of Pentecost, affirmed, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus, who was crucified, had been made, or lifted up as, Lord and Messiah (Christ). When he said that, the people were “pricked in their hearts” and began to say, “What shall we do?” resulting in the establishing of the church of God: three thousand souls were born into Zion.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *His Name*: By what name was God known at creation? At Moses’ calling? At the second writing on the stone tables?
2. *In Greek*: What word was translated “Kurios” in the New Testament, and to whom does it refer?
3. *Description*: Name the terms in our lesson that describe God’s character.
4. *Lord and Messiah*: To whom was this title given?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Our lesson today explores the connection between the God of

prophet Zechariah also mentions “Joshua” the “high priest” with “filthy” garments, and opposed by Satan. Might this be speaking of the same One? His garments were stained with the blood of OUR sins as He bore the wrath of God and accomplished redemption for us. The white horse rider of Revelation 19 also wore a vesture “dipped in blood.” He was crowned with many crowns and trod the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. His name was KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. The vengeance He accomplished was our deliverance from sin and satan. His “fury” is against sin. He redeemed us, who had been carried away captive, back to God. The term “cometh from Edom” refers to this victory over sin and the flesh.

“In all their affliction He was afflicted—” In the 53rd chapter Isaiah says, “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” Hebrews 4:15 says He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” He was made like us, so that He might be a “merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrews 2:17).

This was the glorious song of the angels in the skies over Bethlehem. “Glory to God in the highest!” The song of the avenger, and the song of the loving Elder Brother, who lay in the manger.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Jehovah*: Give the meanings to each name: Jehovah Elohim, Jehovah El Roi, Jehovah El Olam, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah M’Kaddesh, Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Tsabaoth, Jehovah Rohi, Jehovah Tsidkenu, Jehovah Shammah, Jeshua.
2. *Personal*: Share a time when one of these names was revealed to you.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

We have studied the many names of Jehovah: Jehovah Elohim, Jehovah El Roi, Jehovah El Olam, Jehovah Jireh, Jehovah Rapha, Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah M’Kaddesh, Jehovah Shalom, Jehovah Tsabaoth, Jehovah Rohi, Jehovah Tsidkenu, Jehovah Shammah. We

WORD DEFINITIONS

Isaiah 7:14 “Immanuel”: (Hebrew) immanu—with us; El—God; With us is God, or God with us.

Isaiah 12:2 “Lord Jehovah”: “This is one of the four places in which our translators have retained the original word Yahweh, though the Hebrew word occurs often in the Scriptures. The other places where the word Jehovah is retained in our version are, Exodus 6:3; Psalm 68:8; and Isaiah 26:4. The original in this place is יהוה יâh yehovâh” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*). “The repetition of the name denotes emphasis and the unchangeableness of God's character” (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*).

Matthew 1:21 “Jesus”: “This is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which was originally Hoshea (Numbers 13:8, 16), but changed by Moses into Jehoshua (Numbers 13:16; 1 Chronicles 7:27), or Joshua. After the Exile it assumed the form Jeshua, whence the Greek form Jesus. It was given to our Lord to denote the object of his mission, to save (Matthew 1:21)” (*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*).

Luke 2:11 “Christ the Lord”: “This is the only place where these words come together; and I see no way of understanding this ‘Lord’ but as corresponding to the Hebrew Jehovah” (*Alford; Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first ten verses in our lesson come from Isaiah, son of Amoz, who is called “the gospel prophet.” His Hebrew name signifies *Salvation of Jahu* (a shortened form of Jehovah), He prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1:1), covering probably 758 to 698 B.C. He was married and had two sons. Rabbinical tradition says that Isaiah, when 90 years old, was sawn asunder in the trunk of a carob tree by order of Manasseh, to which it is supposed that reference is made in Hebrews 11:37” (*Smith’s Bible Dictionary*).

Isaiah foretold Jesus’ birth and mission, giving Him the name “Immanuel.” The 63rd chapter speaks of Him as victor, redeemer and avenger. It specifically speaks of Him treading the winepress of God’s wrath against sin, staining His garments with blood. The

creation, Jehovah Elohim, and the Lord Jesus Christ of redemption, with His names, titles and character qualities revealed to His people in the ages between creation and crucifixion. What a wonderful, never-ending study, the surface of which we have only touched in this brief lesson!

I remember the connection being made in my teenage years by an anointed message, “I AM.” The minister began by reading Pilate’s question to Jesus, “What is truth?” The definition of *truth*, the minister stated, is “That which really IS.” Then he read where God answered Moses’ question about His identity. “I AM THAT I AM”

“I AM.”

“That which REALLY IS.”

Jesus told His disciple, Thomas, “I am the way, *the truth*, and the life” (John 14:6, emphasis added).

Only in receiving the crucified and risen Jesus Christ as YOUR Lord and Savior can you come to know the Lord God of creation as King of kings and Lord of lords! Bow before Him today!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” 1 Timothy 3:16.

A ex-member of the organization known as *Jehovah’s Witnesses* once told me that before coming out of that sect, he had been asked by one of their leaders to present a Bible lesson on “Why We Should Worship Jehovah—Not Jesus Christ.” After searching the scriptures, the member concluded there was nothing in the Word of God that forbids the worship of Jesus.

The fact is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, IS ALSO JEHOVAH GOD! He verified this when he declared to the unbelieving Jews, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I **am**” (John 8:58, emphasis added). Jesus did not refrain from acknowledging who He is. He is the second person of Jehovah, the great I AM. “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his

Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; ... And again, when he [Jehovah God, the Father] bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. ... But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom” (Hebrews 1:1-3, 6, 8).

How much clearer could the scriptures be? Here God, the Father, declares His Son to be God also! The night before His crucifixion (John 14:8b-9), Philip said to Jesus: “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”

After seeing Jesus following His resurrection (John 20:28), doubting Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus accepted that acknowledgment.

Not once while here in the flesh did Jesus ever refuse worship. Instead, He even declared that the Father had committed all judgment unto Him, “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:23; see also verses 21-22 and 26-27). The wise men worshiped Him at birth (Matthew 2:11). The man He healed, who had been blind from birth, worshiped Him (see John 9:35-38).

In comparing Hebrews, chapter one, with the account of creation in Genesis, chapters one and two, we must conclude that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were **all** involved in the creation of the world and of mankind. “And God said, Let us make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness...” (Genesis 1:26, emphasis added.) Although separate and distinct in person, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in entity and deity.

“In one accord, oh, praise the Father’s name!
With songs of triumph magnify the Son,
And give the Spirit just and equal fame;
Oh, glorify the Holy Three in One!”
(*Evening Light Songs* #54, verse 4.)

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 12:2 Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

Isaiah 63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

3 I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

5 And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

8 For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

MEMORY VERSE: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:11

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The prophets foretold a Savior, who would redeem God’s people and avenge them of their adversary; the angels announcing Christ’s birth confirmed Him as the promised Savior—Redeemer, Messiah, Lord and Immanuel.

REFLECTIONS

“Who all is going to be there?” That’s a question many of us ask while deciding to accept an invitation or not. It’s a legitimate question because the composition of the crowd can make a huge difference. A gathering tends to take on a personality all its own, for good or bad, depending simply on who’s there.

Even in our church services we’re often curious about those in attendance. Have we ever asked who was there—perhaps in our local congregation, at a revival or campmeeting? And the response was a list of names—saints, friends, family. But how wonderful to hear the reply—and the Lord was there!

God utilizes and works through His people with their various potentials and personalities. He sets the tone for the service, each person contributing. He anoints and the unseen presence of His Spirit influences, encourages and inspires. Without it our worship would be futile.

His word gives us the promise that where two or three are gathered together in His name He would be in the midst. We can count on it; He will be there every time and in every place. We are not to be discouraged by small numbers. In worship, God sets a minimum requirement of two. As long as we meet the requirements and conditions, He promises to be there.

Additionally, we have an even more precious and personal promise of His continual presence: *Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world.* It doesn’t matter where life may take you, He has promised to *always* be there. And God is not slack concerning His promises.

—Bro. Darrell Johnson

MARCH 31, 2019

JESUS—JEHOVAH IS SALVATION; IMMANUEL—GOD WITH US

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and

JANUARY 13, 2019

JEHOVAH EL ROI—THE LORD WHO SEES ME

Genesis 16:1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

13 And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her,

Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

MEMORY VERSE: O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. —Psalm 139:1-3

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Hagar, the Egyptian maid of Sarai and second wife of Abram, fleeing from the harsh treatment of Sarai, was found by the Lord near a fountain in the desert and given direction, comfort and a prophecy of her posterity. She named the fountain after the personal revelation given her by Jehovah-El Roi.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 16:1 “Hagar”: stranger or sojourner; a word purely Hebrew, probably given her by Abram. It comes from a Arabic verb which means “to flee” or “run away.” Whether she was part of the group of servants Pharaoh gave Abram when he left Egypt or an Egyptian fugitive rescued by Abram when he lived in the Negeb, the dry plains country in the southern part of the land of Canaan which lay nearest Egypt, we may only speculate. She may have been given the name afterward because of her flight into the desert away from Sarai.

Genesis 16:3 “Wife”: “Used to describe an inferior, though not degrading, relation, in countries where polygamy prevails. Hagar, Sarai's slave, of whom she had the entire right of disposing, was given by her mistress' spontaneous offer, to be the secondary wife of Abram, in the hope of obtaining the long-looked-for heir” (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*). “Concubinage, under that dispensation, was perfectly lawful; therefore he could, with equal justice and innocence, when it was lawful in itself, and now urged by the express desire of Sarai, take Hagar to wife. And it is very likely that he might think that his posterity, whether by wife or concubine, as both were lawful, might be that intended by the

God, the dwelling place of God, is with His people. And our dwelling place is in God.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Twelve Gates*: Whose names were on them?
2. *Twelve Foundations*: Whose names were on them? Share the meaning of these names.
3. *Jehovah Shammah*: What does it mean?
4. “*He Will Rest in His Love*”: Share the meaning of this phrase.
5. *Zion*: Share the spiritual meaning of this city.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What made Eden a blessed place to live? Was it the blooming flowers, the lush garden, perfect weather, or sparkling rivers? No, none of these beauties compared to the joy of *God being there*. He came each day to commune with them.

What made the long year on the ark bearable for Noah and His family? Or Jacob's weary night with a stone for his pillow? What caused the Israelites to survive on the desert? Was it not because *God was there*? What made the young Hebrew men able to withstand a furnace heated seven times its normal? How did Daniel stay alive in the den full of hungry lions? *God was there*.

God was there one night in the hay manger in Bethlehem. “Say of any place ‘Jehovah-shammah, the Lord is there,’ and be it tent or temple, you have spoken glorious things of it... Speak of Gethsemane, and we tell you God was there. Before Herod, and Pilate, and Caiaphas, and on the cross—the Lord was there. Though in a sense there was the hiding of God, and Jesus cried, ‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’ yet in the deepest sense Jehovah was there, bruising the great sacrifice. The thick darkness made a veil for the Lord of glory, and behind it He that made all things bowed His head and said, ‘It is finished.’ God was in Christ Jesus on the cross, and we, beholding Him, feel that we have seen the Father. O Calvary, we say of thee, ‘The Lord is there.’” (*Charles Spurgeon*).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

“renew His love,” which is what many translations use.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today begins with the final words of Ezekiel’s description of the Holy City. It bears resemblance to John’s description of the New Jerusalem in the 21st chapter of Revelation. The many terms and measurements in Ezekiel do not work out in a physical, practical sense. We can be sure the hidden depths in these descriptions can only be answered in a spiritual realm. By the connection to John’s vision—his definition of the holy city being “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” which we know to be the church of God (Ephesians 5)—we can discover many clues. Ezekiel speaks of there being one measurement for walls, doors, perimeter, etc.; John speaks of the city being “foursquare.” Ezekiel speaks of there being a “Law of the house.” Spiritually, we know that law is “Holiness unto the Lord.” The law of holiness is the same for individuals (like rooms in a building) as it is for the entire group.

The twelve gates of Revelation 21 correspond to the gates mentioned by Ezekiel; three names from the twelve tribes on the east, three gates named on the north; three on the south; and three on the west. John saw an angel at each gate, and each gate was formed out of one pearl. The wall that he saw had twelve foundations; in each of them was an apostle’s name and each were made with a different precious stone. Again, I don’t pretend to understand the deep allegories in these symbols; however, we know they are there.

But this lesson is about the special name given to the city. Many times in the Old Testament God spoke about a place where He would put His name. In those days it was the tabernacle in the wilderness; later, the tabernacle at Shiloh and then the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, or Zion, became the prophetic term for the church of God, which is His dwelling place, the “place where He puts His name,” now.

The Psalmists, prophets Isaiah, Zephaniah and Zechariah all celebrate the comforting promise that God would dwell “in the midst” of Zion.

Our memory verse gives a very important key. The tabernacle of

promise” (*Clarke’s Commentary*).

Genesis 16:6 “Dealt hardly with her”: afflicted or mishandled her in order to humble her.

Genesis 16:9 “Angel”: messenger. “Of the Lord”: Jehovah (Yahweh), the existing one; the proper name of the one, true God. The term, “Maleach [angel or messenger] Jehovah” (also Maleach Elohim in other places) is constantly spoken of as being Divine, not a created angel; and is worshipped by those to whom He was revealed without rebuke. “This person, who is here called malach Yehovah, *the Angel of the Lord*, is the same who is called dellac hammalach haggioel, *the redeeming Angel or the Angel the Redeemer*, Genesis 48:16; malach panaiv, *the Angel of God’s presence*, Isaiah 63:9; and malach habberith, *the Angel of the Covenant*, Malachi 3:1; and is the same person which the Septuagint, Isaiah 9:6, term *the Angel of the Great Counsel or Design*” (*Clarke’s Commentary*).

Genesis 16:11 “Ishmael”: God hears.

Genesis 16:14 “Beerlahairoi”: translated by some, “Well of the living One of vision,” or “The living One who sees me;” or by others, “Well of the life of vision,” where after seeing God life was preserved or new life was imparted.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It had been ten years since God called Abram to leave his country and sojourn in Canaan and had promised him a son. During that time, because of famine, he traveled to Egypt. In fear of Pharaoh killing him and taking his wife Sarai because of her great beauty, Abram claimed her as sister and not wife. Pharaoh did desire Sarai and took her with him, but God intervened and Pharaoh restored Abram’s wife to him along with gifts of servants and livestock. After this Abram and his nephew Lot parted ways; Abram became involved in conflicts between area kings, rescuing Lot, who was a prisoner of the war; was blessed by a special king/priest, Melchizedek; and had a special visit from God, which resulted in Abram building an altar of sacrifice and entering into a covenant with God.

Abram was now eighty-five and Sarai was seventy-five, and there was still no sign of a child being born to them. God had not as yet revealed that their heir would be born through Sarai. Their faith yet

being imperfect, desperation to achieve the conception of the son who would bring the promised Messiah drove Sarai to suggest that Abram father the son by her maid Hagar, and Abram to agree with her.

The dynamics in this home are too complicated to describe in this short lesson; however, the main focus today is what happened when Hagar fled into the desert. Fully intending to run all the way back to Egypt, she was “found” by the Angel of the Lord. As we discovered in the Word Definitions, this Angel was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ in the form He often took in the Old Testament when He appeared to people from time to time.

Here you have a home situation that, though lawful in that time, was clearly out of line with God’s original plan; people who were supposed to be people of faith—the only people she knew who believed in the one, true God—being harsh and overbearing; and a slave, a foreigner, a young woman: alone, unprotected, afraid, newly pregnant and on the run. He came to her as One who “saw” her, who had been looking after her with tender love and care, who knew her, knew her unborn child, and knew his future. In awe and worship, she touched the water bubbling up out of the desert place, whispering, “He sees me! He knows me! Have I really seen Him face to face? Watched Him walk away until he faded from sight? Oh, this is a blessed place! You are the well of the living God who sees me, whom I have seen and yet live!”

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Hagar*: Define her name and explain her status.
2. *Sarai*: Can you explain the motivation for her actions?
3. *Angel*: Share the blessed significance of this individual.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Several things have touched me deeply as I studied this story. First, the raw humanity that is presented here. “Here in our weakness You find us falling before Your throne.” The desperation of waiting ten years on a promise and still no sign of fruition. The failing

the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

MEMORY VERSE: And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. —Revelation 21:3

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The holy city, the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb which descended out of heaven from God, with a wall and foundations named for the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles, representing the church of God from both Old and New Testaments, has been given the name Jehovah Shammah, meaning “The Lord is There,” signifying that this is the dwelling place of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, who is the Light, Glory and Presence of the city of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Ezekiel 48:30 “Goings out”: Some translations read “exits” but the same word is used elsewhere in Scripture to mean “boundary line or border,” which is more likely here, as the measurement for the perimeter of the city was given before the gates were established and named.

Ezekiel 48:35 “The Lord is there”: Hebrew *Jehovah Shammah*.

Zephaniah 3:17 “He will rest in his love”: Hebrew *be silent*. “‘He will rest’—literally, be silent—‘in His love; He will joy over thee with singing.’ As to the former, loving hearts on earth know that the deepest love knows no utterance, and can find none. A heart full of love rests as having attained its desire and accomplished its purpose. It keeps a perpetual Sabbath, and is content to be silent...But side by side with this picture of the repose of God’s joy is set with great poetic insight the precisely opposite image of a love which delights in expression, and rejoices over its object with singing. The combination of the two helps to express the depth and intensity of the one love...” (*MacLaren’s Expositions*). The *Septuagint* renders the word

MARCH 24, 2019

JEHOVAH SHAMMAH—THE LORD IS THERE

Ezekiel 48:30 And these are the goings out of the city on the north side, four thousand and five hundred measures.

31 And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.

32 And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.

33 And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.

34 At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.

35 It was round about eighteen thousand measures: and the name of the city from that day shall be, The LORD is there.

Psalms 46:5 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.

Isaiah 12:6 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee

Zephaniah 3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem.

15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.

17 The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Zechariah 2:5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

Revelation 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and

bodies and yearning hearts. The flawed idea which brought bitterness, regret and family conflict. A young slave woman with nowhere to go, and an expected baby—what would happen to him?

Secondly, I see a loving Savior, a Redeemer; One who had never forgotten His promise; whose eyes continually search the earth for broken, searching, wayward hearts who would receive His help. Does this not point us, wounded and lonely and lost, to the seeking Savior, the wounded Savior on the cross who understands, who knows us, who can direct us?

O, that hearts today would open their eyes to the One who sees and hears and knows! You who are running; you who feel alone and forsaken; you who feel like a foreigner and of no worth to anyone. You who feel used by religious people, who, although loved and taught by God, have so much yet to learn! Maybe you are a young lady, alone, expecting a baby, and scared. God sees you and your baby. He has a plan for your child. Listen to Him, and follow what He says to you. He is your *Jehovah-El Roi*.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Jehovah-El Roi—the Living One who sees me! How complicated things get when we make our own choices and get out of God's will. William Jenks said, "When men's passion is upon the throne, reason is out the door, and is neither heard nor spoken." The trouble is in its infant stage here when Abraham is feeling the weight of the conflict between the memory. Humanly speaking, it looks like God could have been justified by saying, "You all got yourselves into this mess; you get yourselves out of it," but He didn't. He looks down and sees Hagar and speaks such comfort to her.

To a young woman who was expecting a baby, who was in a desert place, and running from the abusive environment she was in, this meeting from God was special. Can you imagine that she was actually willing to return to Sarah and Abraham after this visit with God? After she heard the voice of God and recognized that the Living One saw her, she said, "Thou God seest me." She then was without reluctance to return to her master.

We sing the song, "Just To Know That He Knows." What comfort

it brings to us when we know He sees us and understands what we are going through! This meeting with God was one of two that Hagar was to have. Direction and prophecy were given both times (Genesis 16:7 and 21:17). The first visit was before Ishmael was born and the next was approximately 13 years later. We may forget God's promises to us and need reassuring once in a while, but "Thou God who sees me" is always faithful to pay us a visit, cheer, and comfort us along the way.

—Bro. James Bell

JANUARY 20, 2019

JEHOVAH EL OLAM—THE EVERLASTING GOD

Genesis 21:33 And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.

Exodus 15:18 The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

Deuteronomy 33:27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Psalms 90:1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Psalms 100:5 For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psalms 102:25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

Isaiah 26:4 Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

Isaiah 40:28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his

true depth of meaning and spiritual application of Jehovah Tsidkenu as it points to Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. It is only by His blood shed on the cross that He becomes holiness and righteousness to us. Praise the Lord for this blessed name we have in Christ!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

I'm very impressed with the quote from Matthew Henry, "This righteousness ... becomes ours ... through the Spirit of God, who puts it upon us, clothes us with it, enables us to lay hold upon it, and claim an interest in it."

A common doctrinal error of our modern age is the teaching that salvation is merely a state of trusting in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and His atonement on the cross for our sins while we ourselves remain in an unrighteous condition. Everybody sins more or less every day, they say, but if you trust in Christ, His righteousness is imputed to you instead of your sins. But this is far from what the scriptures in today's lesson teach! Christ didn't come all the way down from His glorious home in Heaven and pay such an awful price for our redemption just to leave us to wallow around in the same fallen nature we were born with, imagining that because we believe in Him He counts us as righteous, and that someday, when He comes back, we are going to receive an actual moral transformation. No indeed! By virtue of His atonement, the "messenger of the covenant," the Holy Spirit (Malachi 3:1-3), can come into the temple of our body, if we meet the conditions, and take possession of our body, soul, and spirit in such a way that the righteousness of Jesus Christ will be imparted to us NOW in a REAL sense.

The attributes of God's nature, so contrary to who we naturally are in the flesh, can only become natural to us through the supernatural endowment of power from on high. By imparting to us the virtue of Jesus' sanctifying blood, the Spirit covers our souls with the garment of God's own righteousness—"fine linen, clean and white." He makes us real saints, who share His identity and His name!

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

given to us by His own blood, is portrayed as “fine linen, white and clean.”

There is one name we must have to enter heaven, and when He looks at our ID we’d better have it written there: Jehovah Tsidkenu. Jehovah is my righteousness.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Line of David*: Who is the King that would reign on David’s throne?
2. *Jesse*: Who is the Branch that would come from this root?
3. *Root*: From whom did Jesse descend, as spoken of in Isaiah and in Revelation?
4. *The End*: Who is the fulfilment of the law, and is made unto us righteousness, so we may be the righteousness of God in Him?
5. *All That Matters*: Paul’s righteousness was rubbish, so what kind of righteousness did he desire?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“He is here spoken of as the Lord our Righteousness. He is so our Righteousness as no creature could be. His obedience unto death is the justifying righteousness of believers, and their title to heavenly happiness. And their sanctification, as the source of all their personal obedience is the effect of their union with him, and of the supply of this Spirit. By this name every true believer shall call him, and call upon him. We have nothing to plead but this: Christ has died, yea, rather is risen again; and we have taken him for our Lord. This righteousness which he has wrought out to the satisfaction of law and justice, becomes ours; being a free gift given to us, through the Spirit of God, who puts it upon us, clothes us with it, enables us to lay hold upon it, and claim an interest in it. The Lord our Righteousness is a sweet name to a convinced sinner; to one that has felt the guilt of sin in his conscience; seen his need of that righteousness, and the worth of it” (*Matthew Henry’s Commentary*).

As in so many names we have studied in this series, we find the

understanding.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Lamentations 5:19 Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever; thy throne from generation to generation.

Revelation 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Also Isaiah 44:6-8.)

Revelation 11:15b The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

MEMORY VERSE: Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. —John 8:58

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Abraham called on the name of Jehovah El Olam, the everlasting God, who was known and recognized in that way by Moses, the Psalmists, the prophets. By ascribing this quality also to Christ, Jesus’ own words as recorded by the apostles established the truth of the incarnation of Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 21:33 “The Lord, the everlasting God”: Hebrew: Jehovah El ‘olam. “In Genesis 14:22, Abraham claimed for Jehovah that he was El ‘elyon, the supreme God; in Genesis 17:1, Jehovah reveals Himself as El shaddai, the almighty God; and now Abraham claims for Him [El ‘olam] the attribute of eternity. As he advanced in holiness, Abraham also grew in knowledge of the manifold nature of the Deity, and we also more clearly understand why the Hebrews called God, not El, but Elohim. In the plural appellation all the Divine attributes were combined. El might be ‘elyon, or shaddai, or ‘olam; Elohim was all in one” (*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*).

Deuteronomy 33:27 “Refuge”: dwelling place; habitation; the same as in Psalm 90:1.

Psalm 90:2 “From everlasting to everlasting”: “From the eternity

that is past, before time began; to the eternity that is after, when time shall have an end. This is the highest description of the eternity of God to which human language can reach" (*Clarke's Commentary*).

Isaiah 40:28 "Everlasting": Hebrew *olam*: long duration, antiquity, futurity.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Abraham was one hundred years old when God blessed him and Sarah, who was ninety, with their promised son, Isaac. Soon, conflict developed between Ishmael and the son of promise and Abraham and Sarah sent Ishmael and his mother Hagar out on their own.

Afterward the Philistine king Abimelech and Abraham made a covenant of peace between them and as was Abraham's usual way, he turned the occasion into a time of worship to God. It was here he called upon the Lord as the everlasting God. He had seen the character of God revealed in many different ways. Twenty-five years he had waited for his son. His life had been filled with journeys, conflicts and many times of earnest prayer. Through it all He could see God, faithful, unchanging, enduring. And this is how he prayed: "Everlasting God." How significant this is as we consider that his next test was the offering of Isaac upon Mount Moriah! His comprehension of and trust in the unchanging, eternal God of power gave him the strength to obey God; he was rewarded with the revelation of Jehovah Jireh.

"Forever and ever." This next verse in our lesson is the triumphant finale to the chorus sung by Moses and the children of Israel after they had witnessed their enemies, the Egyptians, being destroyed at the Red Sea.

The everlasting arms of an eternal God are extolled in Moses' last blessing upon the children of Israel, recorded in the fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy. Moses was pronouncing prophetic blessings upon Israel, tribe by tribe. As he ended, he commended them to the unending, enduring, never-failing comfort, refuge and help of God, who would keep them safe, supply their temporal needs, and exalt them to inherit the high places of all their enemies.

The ninetieth Psalm is also written by Moses. Again he extols the eternal qualities of God as he recalled Israel's forty-year-long journey

of Pentecost concerning Jesus' death and resurrection and applied these Old Testament promises to Him. It is very clear that the apostles applied these prophecies, not to a future millennial reign, but right then, in the establishing of His church at Pentecost.

Isaiah prophesied of the branch that would grow out of the roots of Jesse in the first verse of Isaiah 11. This is interesting, because he also calls the Messiah, in verse 10, a "root" of Jesse. In the book of Revelation, Jesus calls Himself "the root and offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16). So Christ is root and branch—spiritually, David originated in Christ, and in his physical lineage, Christ came from David! The prophet Zechariah also mentions the Branch, pointing forward to Jesus Christ (Zechariah 3:8; 6:12-13).

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of Jacob, or Israel being given the title "The Lord our Righteousness." Where may we find this fulfillment in scripture? The passage in Revelation 3:12 is very clear. Those who overcome will be have not only God's name, but the name of the city of God, the new Jerusalem, divinely inscribed upon them Israel's new name, "The Lord our Righteousness" and God's name, "The Lord our Righteousness." How may one overcome and acquire this new name? "They overcame...by the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 12:11). Our memory verse mentions the spiritual clothing of the Lamb's bride, fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints. Where do the white linen robes come from? They "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14).

Paul in I and II Corinthians gives the blessed truth that Christ is made unto us holiness and righteousness, and that He, who had no sin, was made sin "for us," that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul gave his personal testimony in Philippians 3. He was without fault as a Pharisee; blameless concerning the righteousness of the law. Remember? Jesus told His disciples that they could not enter the kingdom of heaven unless their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the Pharisees. So what was a man to do? If you fulfilled all the law, but that wasn't enough, what then? "Christ is the end (fulfillment) of the law for righteousness."

So a man's own righteousness which he could acquire by doing everything he was supposed to do, is, in Isaiah's words, "filthy rags," and in Paul's words, "rubbish. Garbage." But Christ's righteousness,

Revelation 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

MEMORY VERSE: And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. —Revelation 19:8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The name, Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness, was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who was the righteous branch that ascended to David's throne, died in our stead so we might be made righteous in Him, writes upon us His Name and the name of the new Jerusalem, and grants that we may be clothed in the white linen of His righteousness.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Jeremiah 23:5 "I will raise unto David a righteous branch": a prophecy of Jesus Christ, who was of the lineage of David.

Romans 10:4 "End": termination; fulfillment; aim; purpose.

Philippians 3:8 "Count them as dung": rubbish; garbage.

Revelation 19:8 "Saints": set apart; sacred; holy. "Different from the world, because of likeness to the Lord" (*HELPS Word Studies*).

LESSON BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION

The prophecy given by Jeremiah has its roots in the promise that God gave to David in II Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:3-4; 34-37 and Psalm 132:11-12. "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." We can read its fulfillment in the words the angel Gabriel said to Mary when he appeared to announce that she would be the mother of the Messiah. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). Peter also, in the verse in our lesson from Acts chapter 2, spoke to the Jews on the day

with no certain dwelling place; but, he exclaims, "YOU are our home! In every generation, before the beginning, and after time ends, You are God!"

In Psalm 100 we are reminded that God's mercy is everlasting (Psalm 136 repeats this refrain: His mercy endureth forever). Psalms 102:25-27 is quoted in Hebrews 1:10-12 and is applied to Jesus Christ.

The prophet in Isaiah 26 speaks of God's everlasting strength, literally calling Him the "Rock of Ages," from which comes the familiar hymn by that name. In chapter 40 we again find the name Jehovah-Olam—the Lord, the Everlasting God; in chapter 57 we are told that He inhabits eternity.

Jeremiah, weeping as he looked over the ruins of his beloved Israel, comforted himself by remembering that God remains forever, even when everything around us crumbles into chaos, and that, generation after generation, God is still on His throne and in control.

The vision John had of Christ while on the Isle of Patmos gives us glimpses into the eternal kingdom of God as the majestic, glorified Christ proclaimed, "I am Alpha and Omega," once again establishing Himself as God incarnate as He says nearly the same words God spoke in Isaiah 44:6. In chapter eleven John sees a picture of the end of all things, where Christ in His eternal kingdom reigns forever and ever.

Our memory verse contains the statement which made the Jews very angry with Jesus as He used the same words for Himself as God had used in revealing His name to Moses. "I AM."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Before the World Began*: Which verses describe Jesus in this way?
2. *Rock of Ages*: Which verse gives this title to the Lord Jehovah?
3. *In Control*: Which verse shows the comfort this brought to a weeping prophet?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...” Paul, writing in Romans 1:20 made this statement, and what an interesting study can be made of the different things in creation that show us eternity!

Consider, for instance the concept of infinity in mathematics and science. I grew up learning that the number line goes on infinitely in either direction, or that pi is a number (rounded to 3.14 for the purpose of calculating the circumference of a circle) that goes on forever. There are studies about how the number of times light is refracted from a droplet of water is infinitesimal (we call this a rainbow). My point here is that carnal man is always trying to explain why an eternal God cannot exist; yet at the same time he acknowledges this principle in physics.

In the rainbow, in light waves, in music, in the spiral patterns of shells, flowers, and DNA, and in the universe itself, we can find witnesses to the eternity of God.

Our verses today remind us of the never-ending reign of God, the everlasting refuge that God is, the eternal dwelling place that is His presence, and the everlasting strength and mercy of God. Contemplating these truths brings comfort and solidity to our faith, even in the midst of changing times.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Idolatry is the worship and admiration of a person or object that makes one feel secure. While it may seem that idolatry is a thing of the past, let us consider the many idols that are being worshiped and deified in this present day and time: jobs, money, nature, the human body, religion, and celebrities of music, cinema, or sports just to name a few.

On Mount Carmel, Elijah challenged the people to quit struggling between two opinions and "...let the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." When the prophets of Baal begged the attention of

6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Jeremiah 33:14 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.

17 For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

Acts 2:29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

I Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

II Corinthians 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Philippians 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

REFLECTIONS

"The Lord is my shepherd," along with the other verses in Psalm 23 are some of the grandest truths penned by the Spirit of God. Oh, the comfort that David must have felt when these truths began to dawn upon his understanding! He knew what a shepherd was. He had laid his life on the line for his sheep when facing a bear and a lion who had come to devour. He had been there to find green pastures and good water for them. He loved and cared for them—and to think that the Lord watches over His people as a shepherd!

The Lord is able to open just the right door for us. He can open a niche; provide a job; reveal a source for making a living that matches our skill, our personality, our desires. He can turn the tide for us when it looks like we are overwhelmed and going under the waves of difficulty, trial, or cares. He promised to not let us be tempted above that which we are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape. He can lead us and help us in all of our decisions of life. He is able to pick us up and carry us in His arms when we are unable to walk. He can enlighten our understanding with good spiritual food that nourishes and strengthens the inner man.

"All we like sheep have gone astray." There is a tendency in sheep and humans to stray and to fail to recognize danger. Jesus mentioned how the shepherd leaves the ninety and nine that are safe and seeks the one that has strayed off course. Looking back, I can see how the Lord sought me out when I had gotten off course.

Let us believe in these scriptures and believe in His love for us as individuals. Jesus is a personal Savior. I can testify with the Psalmist, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

—Bro. Bob Wilson

MARCH 17, 2019

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

their god, Elijah prodded them by saying, "Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." The false god Baal could not even reach the level of humanity, much less that of an eternal God.

Elijah then prayed a simple prayer. The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. The only thing left was the everlasting God!

Idol worship blocks the will of God in our lives. It hinders us from being properly cared for by the everlasting God who loves us and gave Himself for us. The Lord wants our total security to be in Him. I am thankful that we can trust in this God who is not limited by the laws of nature. Our God is the God who inhabits eternity! The Lord knows just how to take care of us here in this present world and in the eternal world to come.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

JANUARY 27, 2019

JEHOVAH JIREH—THE LORD WHO PROVIDES

Genesis 22:6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou

any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

MEMORY VERSE: But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. —Philippians 4:19

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God revealed Himself to Abraham and Isaac as Jehovah-jireh, “The Lord Who provides,” or “The Lord will see to it,” when He called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham obeyed, but God intervened and provided a substitute, sparing Isaac’s life and establishing a precious, prophetic truth which was fulfilled in Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 22:14 “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen”: “In Genesis 22:8, Abraham had said “Elohim-jireh,” *God will provide*. He now uses *Jehovah* as the equivalent of *Elohim*. It is added that hence arose a proverb “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen,” or rather, *In the mount of Jehovah it shall be provided*. The verb literally means *to see, or, to see to a thing*, and the sense of the proverb plainly is that in man’s necessity God will Himself see to it, and provide due help and deliverance” (*Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*).

“On the mount of Abraham’s sacrifice Jehovah would afterwards reveal himself for the salvation of his people, as he then interposed for the help of Abraham—a prophecy which was afterwards fulfilled in the manifestations of the Divine glory given in the Solomonic temple and in the incarnation of Jesus Christ” (*Pulpit Commentary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND

The scriptures in our lesson were taken from Genesis 22, which

DISCUSSION:

1. *My Shepherd*: From which scripture comes the name “Jehovah El Roi?”
2. *Gently Led*: What is especially comforting about this scripture?
3. *David*: Who fulfills the prophecy that David would once again rule God’s people?
4. *The Door*: What is the only way into the sheepfold?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Throughout time there have been false shepherds and false Christs, those who would claim salvation came through following them—the thieves, robbers, strangers and hirelings who tried to have access to or harm the sheep. Jesus said they had tried to climb up some other way than the door, and that there was no other way, and no other door, than He Himself.

Jesus did something that no other prophet could do or has done to bring salvation to lost mankind. Paul mentioned that when he admonished the Corinthians not to claim, “I follow Paul.” Or, “I follow Apollos.” “Was Apollos crucified for you?” Paul asked. There is no other Savior than the Son of God Who laid down His life for the sheep. There was no other way to save them than the cross. There was no other, in earth or in heaven; no man, no angel; who could make that sacrifice. No man was worthy or sinless, as was Christ; no angel was God’s begotten, with both human and Divine parentage, as was Jesus Christ. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” “It behooved Christ” to suffer, take on the body of man, be touched with human infirmities, be our brother in all things, and to become obedient unto death, “even the death of the cross.”

So Jesus came in by the door; that is, the door of the cross. Here again we have the name given to Jehovah, “Jehovah El Roi,” pointing directly to Jesus, and Him crucified. By the cross, He truly is *our shepherd*.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

people of Israel. Isaiah gives a touching picture of the relationship, and Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Micah all prophesy of God's dealings with wayward and scattered Israel as a shepherd with a flock.

In the New Testament, it was to shepherds that the angel messenger, accompanied by the angelic choir, appeared announcing the good tidings of the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem, the city of David, possibly near the very fields where he had kept his father's flocks long before.

Jesus referred to the righteous as sheep and the unrighteous as goats, as he described the separation of saints and sinners at his return. He told Peter after His resurrection that his special call was to feed His sheep and lambs. John recorded Jesus' description of the close relationship between the sheep and the true shepherd, in contrast to hirelings who didn't care a thing about the sheep. Jesus described how He knows the sheep and names them, calls them by name, goes before them, leads them, provides them pasture, and lays down his life for them. He does this because the sheep are "His own." The hireling runs away from the sheep in times of trouble when the wolves appear. Jesus also referred to "thieves and robbers," strangers, who the sheep would not hear or follow, and who came to steal, kill and destroy. They had tried to climb up into the sheepfold "some other way" than the "door."

Jesus declared that *He* was the door of the sheep. A shepherd leads his sheep into the sheepfold at night, and after putting them through the single opening in the four-walled enclosure, he lies down and his body is "the door." No one can come in or go out, except they go through him. By this picture, Jesus was declaring that He is the only way to salvation; and as long as His flock remain in His fold nothing can harm them.

"But who are not his flock! Neither the backslider in heart, nor the vile Antinomian, who thinks the more he sins, the more the grace of God shall be magnified in saving him; nor those who fondly suppose they are covered with the righteousness of Christ while living in sin; nor the crowd of the indifferent and the careless, nor the immense herd of Laodicean loiterers; nor the fiery bigots who would exclude all from heaven but themselves, and the party who believe as they do" (*Matthew Henry Commentary*).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

opens with God putting Abraham to the test by saying, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." It took several days for Abraham, Isaac and the accompanying servants to make the journey. Apparently, Abraham explained nothing about his mission to his son, who is supposed by many scholars to have been between twenty-five and thirty-six years old. Presently Abraham told his two servants to remain with the pack animals while he and Isaac finished their mission. "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you." In Hebrews 11:17-19 we are told that Abraham's faith persuaded him that when he obeyed God and took the life of his son, God would bring Isaac back to life again. He affirmed his faith when he told the men, "We will be back."

The scene is touching as Isaac bears the wood on his back, Abraham takes the knife and the coals for the fire and together they approach the appointed place. In a tender dialogue, Isaac questions his father about the lamb to be offered and Abraham answers, stating not only his unwavering confidence, trust and faith in the revealed character of God, but a prophetic utterance of a vision of the supreme sacrifice that God would provide for all mankind. I wonder if he does so with a tremor in his voice and tears streaming down his face!

As the altar is being built, at some point Abraham reveals to Isaac the awful truth. Isaac could either flee or resist. He does neither, but typifying the future Messiah laying down His own life, Isaac, without violence or murmuring, willingly offers himself upon the altar. "Isaac was now fully offered both by his father and by himself. The father yields up the son, the son gives up his life; on both sides, as far as will and purpose could go, the sacrifice was complete" (*Clarke's Commentary*).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *A Type*: List the ways in which Isaac typifies Christ.
2. *A Shadow*: In what way was the place (Mount Moriah) typical as well?
3. *Giving Proof*: In what ways did Abraham show/state his

faith?

4. *Looking Forward*: In what statement did Abraham utter prophecy?
5. *MY Jehovah Jireh*: Share personal experiences where Jehovah-jireh revealed Himself to you.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“It was not God's intention that Isaac should actually be sacrificed, yet nobler blood than that of animals, in due time, was to be shed for sin, even the blood of the only begotten Son of God. But in the meanwhile God would not in any case have human sacrifices used. Another sacrifice is provided. Reference must be had to the promised Messiah, the blessed Seed. Christ was sacrificed in our stead, as this ram instead of Isaac, and his death was our discharge. And observe, that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this same mount Moriah; and Calvary, where Christ was crucified, was near. A new name was given to that place, for the encouragement of all believers, to the end of the world, cheerfully to trust in God, and obey him. Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide; probably alluding to what Abraham had said, God will provide himself a lamb. The Lord will always have his eye upon his people, in their straits and distresses, that he may give them seasonable help” (*Matthew Henry*).

I don't think we can ever fully comprehend the wonderful truths presented by this momentous event. We must first be made aware of the deep, unreachable NEED of mankind for a sacrifice, a substitute, for sin. We must grasp the vastness of the statement, “God will provide himself a sacrifice.” What did it take for God to fulfill this need? The emotion that moves us in this story is magnified when we think of what it took for Christ to lay down His life for us. “And when I think of God, His Son not sparing...”

Have you ever felt God calling you to do the impossible, the unthinkable? Another precious truth here is when we, like Abraham, move resolutely in obedience toward the place where we feel it will be impossible to complete the task, the ability to perform is given. God provides. Sometimes when our obedience is fulfilled totally, in our mind and in our will, God receives it as completed and pulls us back, just in time, from the loss we felt was so impossible to bear.

MEMORY VERSE: For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

—1 Peter 2:25

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Shepherd of Israel, was revealed unto David as Jehovah Rohi and extolled by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel as the “one shepherd.” He was declared by Christ Himself as the Good Shepherd, who gave His life, that He might seek, restore, lead and feed His people, who are the sheep of His pasture.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Psalm 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd”: Jehovah Rohi, a combination of the personal name of God with the descriptive name of God. Depending on how the languages of the Bible are translated into English, some people say Jehovah; some say Yahweh. The Israelites didn't pronounce God's name at all, but instead used “Lord.” In writing, “Yahweh” was without vowels: YHWH. “Rohi, or Ro'i,” means to pasture, tend, or feed domestic animals. “Want”: to lack; need; be lacking; decrease; become empty.

Psalm 23:2 “Green pastures”: pleasant places; grassy homesteads. “Still waters”: waters of refreshment.

Psalm 23:3 “He restoreth my soul”: my soul (my spirit, when exhausted, weary or sad) He bringeth, or will bring back; He causes my life to return; He quickens me.

Isaiah 40:11 “He shall gently lead those that are with young”: “Ewes that are suckling their lambs require specially tender treatment” (*Pulpit Commentary*).

LESSON BACKGROUND

The concept of God watching His people, individually and as a whole, like a shepherd, beginning with Jacob (Israel) as he blessed Joseph's sons in Genesis 48:15, is a common metaphor in the scriptures. David also personally applied it to his life, detailing the many aspects of a shepherd, no doubt from his own experiences in keeping the flocks of his father. Moses was a shepherd for his father-in-law's sheep when God called him to tend a greater flock, the

spareth his own son that serveth him” (Malachi 3:17).

I would encourage everyone to study Malachi and perceive how the Lord of hosts was speaking to people then and how he speaks the same now.

—Bro. James Bell

MARCH 10

JEHOVAH ROHI—THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (See also Ezekiel 34:14.)

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

Isaiah 40:11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Ezekiel 34:11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

15 I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

16 I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Other times, He does allow us to go through what we felt we could not endure. *God still provides.* He provides strength and grace beyond ourselves. As you progress on your Christian journey, no doubt you will experience both situations.

Paul had experienced this, which is why he could state so triumphantly and confidently, “My God will supply,” as found in our memory verse today. In order for us to know God as Jehovah-jireh we will need to go through these places of surrender to God’s will. Let us not draw back, but go on to the perfections of faith which will be given to us at the revelation of our *Jehovah-jireh*.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

There are many instances throughout history where God provided for those who trusted in him. We are often inspired by the testimonies of the patriarchs of old, missionaries of yesteryears and saints of today who stood firm on the word of God and experienced firsthand his faithfulness.

These are the stories that inspire us and encourage us along our spiritual journey. As they followed God’s leading, He was faithful to them; and as we follow His leading, He will be faithful to us as well. For God is no respecter of persons and what He has done for others He’ll do for us.

When, at God’s request, we offer what we have to Him, as in the simple story of the boy with the fish and the loaves, He multiplies our offerings exponentially for our benefit and for the provision of those around us. He proves to us that He is our provider and that we can trust Him.

However, trusting God is not committing some reckless act of sacrifice while trying to prove our devotion to Him. The only true sacrifice that we have is that of obedience—the sacrifice of our will. It is really all we have to offer. It is the one thing that is wholly ours and the one thing over which we have complete control. Obedience is simply the submission of our will to the will of a higher authority.

Abraham did not arbitrarily decide he was offering his son. He didn’t initiate the terms of the sacrifice, God did. Abraham simply obeyed. It was in this obedience that he proved his love for God and

his faith in God's ability to provide.

These stories are not works of fiction, they are the recordings of facts. They're biographies of God's faithfulness written by the saints who saw His works and proved him. We all have a story of our interaction with God. How will your story read?

—Bro. Darrell Johnson

FEBRUARY 3, 2019

JEHOVAH RAPHA—THE LORD WHO HEALS

Exodus 15:22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Psalms 103:2-3 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

MEMORY VERSE: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. —I Peter 2:24

camp or army came to the aid of those who feared the Lord. Jesus, when rebuking Peter about using his sword to defend Him in the garden of Gethsemane, said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Jesus is head of the Church—the host of the redeemed. He commands an "innumerable company" of angels. In the Revelation, He is the rider of the white horse, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who had heavenly armies which followed Him as the beast and the armies of earth made war against Him. An important note is that He was clothed in a vesture that was dipped in blood: a reference to His sufferings and death that had gained Him—and us—the victory.

So again, it is through the cross that we have victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah Tsabaoth.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, speaks in one last desperate attempt to awaken the fearless, presumptuous people to pay attention to the Lord of hosts—who He is and what He says. The Lord of hosts is so omniscient, majestic, and higher than we are as humans.

The people during this time, namely the Edomites, were despising their heritage just like Esau did. They were bringing to the Lord old and sick offerings that weren't worth anything anyway. They were trading in their old wives for younger and prettier ones. In short, they were doing what they wanted to do instead of considering God's law. No wonder the God of heaven left off speaking to them for over 400 years. What a terrible age to live in, when the Lord of hosts, the all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-seeing Creator of all the universe had shut off communications with people!

Malachi mentions "the Lord of hosts" 24 times in his book of only 4 chapters, saying the Lord of hosts is dreadful, unchangeable, great among the heathen etc. He intertwines positive appeals saying the Lord of hosts would pour out a blessing if they would return unto Him and would rebuke the devourer if they would give sacrificial offerings. "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man

term, but Hosea, Amos, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi did.

In the New Testament, the phrase is “Lord of Sabaoth” and was quoted from Isaiah by Paul in Romans 9:29 and used by James in James 5:4, our memory verse. In this passage, James was reproofing the wealthy farmers who were cheating their laborers out of their deserved wages. Those unpaid wages, he warned, were crying out to the Lord Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts! Better to lose millions of dollars than to be on the wrong side of a battle against the Lord of hosts!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Lord of Hosts*: Who is first recorded as having prayed using this name, and what was the result?
2. *The Lord Jesus Christ*: He is identified as being the Lord of hosts by which Psalm, and appeared to which Bible hero?
3. *Called by Thy Name*: Which prophet proclaimed this?
4. *God of Hosts*: Amos the prophet attributed what five things to Him?
5. *Haggai and Zechariah*: What were the commands of the Lord of hosts given to Israel?
6. *Among the Gentiles*: Which prophet foretold that the Gentiles would know Jehovah Tsabaoth?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Before this study, I never knew how many times this name had been given to the Lord God. Some commentators say that it was a deliberate call to exalt the one, true God above all the heavenly bodies—the sun, moon and stars—the “hosts” that were worshipped by the heathen, and affirm Him as LORD above them all. Many times in the Old Testament the elements of nature—the sun, moon, frogs, flies, locusts, calves, hornets, birds, a donkey, thunder, lightning, wind, a worm, a whale—were commanded by God to help or hinder, chasten, speak to, supply for, execute judgment upon, rescue, and instruct mankind.

We also know that the angels, whether one angel or an entire

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Lord proved Himself to Israel at the waters of Marah, immediately after the triumph at the Red Sea, as Jehovah-rapha, “the Lord that healeth thee.”

WORD DEFINITIONS

Exodus 15:23 “Marah”: from a Hebrew root which means “bitter.” The root was also the source of words in the scripture like “grieved,” “vexed,” “enraged,” “moved with choler,” and “provoked.” Marah was a bitter spring in the Sinai Peninsula.

Exodus 15:25 “A tree”: The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem say that, when Moses prayed, ‘the Word of the Lord showed him the tree ... on which he wrote the great and precious name of (Jehovah), and then threw it into the waters, and the waters thereby became sweet.’ But what the tree ... was we are not informed” (*Clarke’s Commentary*). “Statute”: something prescribed or due; a specific decree. “Ordinance”: judgment. “Proved”: to try or test. (The same word as in Genesis 22:1 when God tested Abraham.)

Exodus 15:26 “None of these diseases”: Some scholars take this to mean the plagues which God visited upon the Egyptians prior to the Exodus of the Israelites. Other verses in Deuteronomy (7:15; 28:27) speak of specific diseases particular to the Egyptians: the botch, which was said by some to be an itch that came upon the skin because of a contaminant in the Nile river water at the time of its flooding (others describe it as “boils” or “elephantiasis,” a form of leprosy); tumors or inflammation which caused “burning” or hemorrhoids; scab, or scurvy; and the itch, of various kinds known in Egypt and Syria. Many of the diseases which the Jews suffered in later times did come upon them because they had not observed His laws, including the dietary laws and the laws of cleanliness and sanitation prescribed by God, just as he had warned them in verse 26. “I am the Lord that healeth thee”: Jehovah-Rapha/Rophe; to heal; to make whole; mend; repair; restore. *Rophe* is the Hebrew participle form and is used for the word *physician*, or *one who heals*.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Three days after the mighty miracle of the dry path through the

Red Sea and the complete destruction of and deliverance from their Egyptian pursuers, the children of Israel were faced again with certain horrible death, this time from thirst. Babies were crying, livestock were bawling, young, strong men were fainting. Then the bubbling spring appeared and they fell upon it in frenzy, only to retch upon the sand in anguish. The scorching desert sun, the blowing sand stinging their faces and hopeless desperation drove them to bitter lashing out against Moses.

Again God manifested Himself, not just meeting their need but revealing precious truths about His character and prophetic lessons about redemption.

As was mentioned in Word Definitions, Israel had just come from Egypt where they had seen ten different plagues and afflictions visited upon the Egyptians. They were most likely very familiar with the local diseases which have been described. God was wanting to establish a new nation completely different from all the idol-worshipping nations. It's interesting that He introduces His covenant in this place, early in their wilderness journey, before He ever gave the ten commandments and the rest of the civil and ceremonial laws to Moses for the people. The one thing that would guarantee their vitality and health was obedience to His voice. "For," He says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee. I am the one, true Jehovah God Who heals you from the inside out. I heal your sinfulness, your stubbornness, your rebellion, your willfulness. I heal you from that which gives you 'wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores'" (Isaiah 1:6).

Here again the lesson points to Christ and what He does for us. By the allegory of the tree cast into the bitter waters, we see what the atoning blood of Christ upon the tree does for us. In His atonement is healing for the soul and for the body. He heals bruised spirits, wounded emotions, broken hearts. He heals marriages. He heals nations.

"What changes bitter to sweet for us? The Cross is the true tree which, when 'cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.' Recognition of and yielding to God's will: that is the one thing which for us changes all. The one secret of peace and of getting sweetness out of bitterness is loving acceptance of the will of God" (*MacLaren's Commentary*).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

moving, she was misjudged by Eli the priest and falsely accused of being drunk. Although silent before God with grief, she found words to defend her actions before Eli and pleaded with him to grant grace unto her. Eli blessed her and prophesied that God would grant the request of her heart.

Later at home, the scripture says that "God remembered her" and she had a baby boy, whom she named Samuel, which meant, "Asked of God." True to her pledge, when she weaned him she brought him back to Eli to serve in the tabernacle. Her prayer of rejoicing, a most inspired and sublime oration, is memorialized in I Samuel 2. Hannah's only contact with Samuel from then on was when, on their annual visit, she brought him a new coat which she had made. Later, the Lord visited her again and she had three more sons and two daughters.

The idea of God being commander of a host or army was introduced in the Bible when Jacob, parting ways with his father-in-law Laban, met a company of angels and called them God's host. Mention of a "host" was also made by Joshua when he was preparing to attack Jericho. A man appeared with his sword drawn. Joshua went to him and questioned, "Are you for us or for our adversaries?" The man said, "Nay," and identified himself as "captain of the host of the Lord." By the manner in which he dealt with Joshua, in that he did not rebuke Joshua for falling down and worshipping him, we recognize him as the Lord Jesus Christ, in the angelic form He often assumed when He appeared to his people in the Old Testament.

Psalm 24 is undoubtedly a prophecy of Jesus Christ, pointing forward to His triumphal ascent into heaven after His crucifixion and resurrection.

Isaiah's prayer in chapter 37 was during the occupation of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. After receiving an arrogant, threatening message from the Assyrians, Hezekiah spread the letter out before the Lord and offered his urgent plea for deliverance. The prophet Isaiah brought him word from the Lord that He would deliver Hezekiah without a shot from an arrow. That night, an angel killed 185,000 soldiers in the Assyrian camp and sent Sennacherib back to Nineveh, where he was killed in the temple of his idol by his own sons.

The expression is used fifteen times in the Psalms and many times by Isaiah and Jeremiah. Neither Ezekiel nor Daniel used the

Zechariah 1:3 Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

MEMORY VERSE: Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. —James 5:4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, was the name often given to God very frequently in the Old Testament and twice in the New Testament and meant the God who commanded the hosts of the aerial heavens, the divine army of angels, and the camp of Israel, His people.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Lord of Hosts: “A name or title of God frequently used in the Old Testament, always translated “Yahweh of Hosts” (Yahweh tsebha'oth) in the *American Standard Revised Version*, since Yahweh, never 'Adhonay, is used in this phrase. Evidently the meaning of the title is that all created agencies and forces are under the leadership or dominion of Yahweh, who made and maintains them. It is used to express Yahweh's great power” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

LESSON BACKGROUND

This name for Jehovah, used over 260 times, is first mentioned in I Samuel when Elkanah and his wife Hannah went to the tabernacle of the Lord in Shiloh on their yearly visit. Elkanah had two wives. One wife, Peninnah, had sons and daughters but Hannah had no children. As Hannah, in bitterness of soul and with much weeping, poured out her soul to the Lord in a grief too great for words, only her lips

DISCUSSION:

1. *Marah*: Give the meaning of this word.
2. *Made Sweet*: What healed the waters?
3. *Health Insurance*: What would keep the Israelites from the diseases of the heathen?
4. *His Name*: By what name did Jehovah manifest Himself at Marah?
5. *The Tree*: What event did this typify?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Exploring the connection of obedience to God's voice and the keeping of His statutes to the revelation of Jehovah as the Healer, the Great Physician, J. W. Byers wrote in *The Grace of Healing*: “He did not promise to bless everything they might desire to eat and drink. He did not bless the flesh they lusted after in the wilderness, although because of their continual murmurings he sent it to them. So it is in the gospel dispensation; there are many who profess to love God, whose appetites are depraved. They crave for food and drink such things as God will not bless. The instructions to Noah concerning things clean and unclean, were not to be ignored by Israel. No one could expect God to bless anything outside these limits, neither can we consistently expect Him to bless anything to us for food that is unclean or unhealthful. While we are not under the restrictions of the law in this matter, yet we have no license to indulge any depraved or abnormal appetite. Let all apply to the cleansing blood of Christ for the removal of all such appetites, and then only eat and drink such things as are nourishing and wholesome.

“This is well worth the thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all. We are not restricted to any special diet, perhaps, but if we want God's blessings upon our food, and also want Him to take sickness away from the midst of us, we must carefully follow the directions of His counsel... There is nothing in God's Word to sanction an indiscriminate eating of every kind of food that is prepared. The Word of God and prayer, as well as good judgment, should be our guide as to what we eat and drink.”

This was written during a time well marked in the history of the Church of God as a time of many miracles of healing. I believe this is a concept we should revisit in our age of eating and drinking.

My own personal “Jehovah-Rapha” testimony is that God healed me of an ectopic pregnancy in 1993, sparing my life when the midwife and the doctor who read the ultrasound both expected me to die if I did not have immediate surgery. I felt God wanted me to be anointed and prayed for, and praise God, none of their dire predictions ever took place. After several weeks of constant improvement, the Lord woke me up one morning with these words: “I am the Lord that healeth thee. I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another.” It is a wonderful privilege to know and serve the Great Physician!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

A large percentage of diabetes and coronary blockage can be helped or healed through diet! There are also many testimonials of how diet has helped or even healed cancer, one of the biggest killers in our society. There may be many other diseases that are helped through a good nutritional diet. I am not saying we should exclude God and live independently of Him, but that we should seek His help and guidance to help us know how to eat and to give us the discipline we need to follow. It seems to be irresponsible to know we have an affliction and that certain foods worsen the affliction, and continue to override and eat whatever we want. I heard an expression once—“I would rather die than give up my salt.” I certainly don't agree with this sentiment.

We live in an age of fast foods, junk foods, and foods packed with white sugar and white flour which has little or no nutritional value. Sometimes food is leaned upon as a stress reliever. Many families in our nation have lost the value of sitting around the table together to a good, old fashioned, home-cooked nutritional meal.

If we have fallen into some bad eating habits, the Lord is our healer and can help us. One child-caregiver remarked that when she helped difficult children, the first thing she did was to get them off of sugar. She said the change was quickly observable.

the cessation of the turmoil within—a hushing of our fears by the presence of the One who loves us and gave Himself for us.

As a child in fear runs into the arms of his father for comfort, so we run into the arms of our dear Savior. And the power of His presence soothes all fears and brings peace to the troubled soul.

—Bro. Darrell Johnson

MARCH 3, 2019

JEHOVAH TSABAOOTH—THE LORD OF HOSTS

I Samuel 1:9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

Psalm 24:9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Psalm 46:11 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

Isaiah 37:16 O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

Jeremiah 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Amos 4:13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.

Haggai 1:7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

Gideon was frustrated by the idolatry within his own house. But how could he make a difference? Would he survive an attempt at reformation? He needed direction. Inspiration. Assurance. Peace.

How can I appease God? What can I do? I'll give a gift. We don't have much... Gideon hurried to put together a tasty meal for the stranger. No doubt as the angel touched the bread and fire leaped out his heart quaked. *I am going to die.*

"Peace be unto thee." His vision cleared. God *was* with him. He had answered his plea for a sign. He looked at the ashes on the rock and leaped to pile up stones. "The Lord is my peace." He could do it. He could go and save his people. There would be an end to the turmoil. They could live securely in their homes again.

What about you and me? Is there turmoil around you? In your heart? In your home? Do you need a visit from Jehovah Shalom? Thank God, again we see the fulfillment in Jesus Christ. He is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). He creates peace. He made peace *through the blood of His cross* (Colossians 1:20).

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Modern wars are won by power of force. But once the war is over, troops must be deployed to maintain the peace that has been secured. These peacekeeping forces are equally as important as the troops that initially fought the battle. Their presence in the war-torn region acts as a shield to ward off any uprisings and to subdue any insurgents that may still be lurking about.

Spiritually speaking, we live amid constant conflict. We live where spiritual battles are fought daily. Yet we serve a God of power and a Prince of Peace. His power subdues all foreign invaders and his presence sustains our peace.

The peace experienced by a Christian is not an external thing. It is the power of the Spirit of Christ within us. That presence, though invisible to the naked eye, is clearly seen by the eye of *faith*. When God gives peace, He gives Himself—His presence. He doesn't just bring peace to us, *He* is our peace.

The presence of His Spirit is the force-field that repels any would-be invaders and subdues any lingering insurgents who would dare trouble our spirit and disrupt our rest.

True peace is not merely cessation of the turmoil around us. It is

Jesus also linked sickness and disease with sin and evil. He told one man "to go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon thee." Not all sickness and disease is the result of sin; however, some of it is. Some diseases come from promiscuous sexual behavior. The apostle Paul appears to be referring to these in Romans 1—"receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

Truly, the way of the Lord is right. When we live in harmony of His laws, the Lord helps us maximize this life. "Who but the Christian is happy and free, filled with the glory of God? None in creation so happy as he, washed and redeemed in the wonderful blood."

—Bro. Bob Wilson

FEBRUARY 10, 2019

JEHOVAH NISSI—THE LORD OUR BANNER

Exodus 17:8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.

9 And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

13 And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah nissi:

16 For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will

have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

MEMORY VERSE: But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. —I Corinthians 15:57

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Both Moses, his hand holding up the rod of God, and Joshua, leading the children of Israel to battle, typify Jesus Christ, who is our ensign, or banner—our VICTORY—over all of our soul’s enemies, who are typified in this account by the Amalekites.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Exodus 17:8 “Amalek”: a descendant of Esau; also his posterity and their country. “Rephidim”: a place in the desert, near to where God had caused water to come out of the rock at Mount Horeb, one of the Sinaitic mountains where God had first spoken to Moses out of the burning bush and where the law was given.

Exodus 17:9 “Joshua”: the original name was “Hoshea,” which means *salvation* or *savior*, which Moses later changed to “Jehoshua” or *Jehovah is Salvation* (Numbers 13:16), and became, by contraction, “Joshua”; an Ephraimite, tenth in descent from Joseph; the son of a man named Nun. He was about 45 years old and was probably known to possess military capabilities. This is the first mention of Joshua in the scriptures. “Top of the hill”: “It is implied that there was a conspicuous hill (*gibeah*), not a rock (*tsur*), in the near vicinity of Rephidim, whence Moses could see the fight, and be seen by those engaged in it” (*Pulpit Commentary*). Because they were near to Horeb, the “Mount of God,” also known as Mount Sinai, others have supposed it to be the particular hill mentioned. “Rod of God”: the rod which God had used in the issuing of the plagues of Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea

Exodus 17:10 “Hur”: some Jewish traditions hold that he was Miriam’s son; Josephus says he was Miriam’s husband. He was a descendant of Judah and was the grandfather of the wise and skillful craftsman, Bezaleel, who worked on the tabernacle (I Chronicles 2:20). Hur was also the one left in charge alongside Aaron later in the incident of the golden calf (Exodus 24:14).

In response to the desperate cry of His people, God sent a prophet, unnamed in this account, who reminded them of God’s past deliverances and promises and their disobedience in serving the Amorite (Canaanite) gods.

This provides the backdrop for the events that take place in chapter six. The rest of the story is the wonderful drama of Gideon tearing down the altar of Baal and building an altar to God, calling together an army, experiencing a miraculous sign from God, and following God’s directions in paring down the army to the size God could use. God mightily used Gideon to deliver Israel from their enemies.

This lesson focuses on the Divine visit and what it meant to Gideon. We can also receive much comfort and instruction from this revelation of Jehovah Shalom.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *The Angel of the Lord*: He was actually _____.
2. *Mighty Man of Valor*: Contrast how Gideon felt and how God saw him.
3. *Moment of Truth*: What was Gideon’s reaction when he discovered the true identity of his guest?
4. *Comfort*: How did God assure Gideon?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Can you picture the turmoil and desperation Israel suffered these seven horrible years? Midian’s occupation brought fear, poverty, starvation, death, and hopelessness. Imagine being a child growing up in these conditions. Think of families—young couples hoping to marry; young mothers expecting children; fathers trying to feed their children, sick and elderly ones dying everywhere. They needed the first prophet’s message of judgment. Now they needed—peace.

Gideon personally needed peace. He was churning inwardly with confusion, which he revealed by the questions with which he pelted the angel as soon as he saw him. Why, why, why? Where is God? Where are the miracles? How can God be with us? With me?

Gideon, encouraging him of His presence, promising victory, and comforting him with peace; so much so that Gideon built an altar and called it Jehovah-Shalom.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Judges 6:11 “Angel of the Lord”: the same as “the angel of his presence” as in Isaiah 63:9. In verse 13 Gideon addresses him as “Lord,” which meant “sir” or “one in control.” Verses 14, 16 and 23 say simply, “The Lord,” meaning “Yahweh,” which makes us know it was the Lord Jesus Christ in the angelic form by which He visited Old Testament people.

Judges 6:15 “My family is poor in Manasseh”: Gideon’s father Joash was the head of the family which descended from Abiezer, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh. They were located in the half tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan. Gideon was saying that his tribe had been greatly reduced by the Midianites.

Judges 6:19 “Made ready a kid”: It was customary for the desert Arabs to supply their guests with milk and raisins, figs or dates, as an appetizer; then to prepare a kid, goat or sheep by simmering half of it in broth and cutting the other half into kabobs. They served the meat and broth with some bread, roasted the kabobs and put them in a basket for their guests to take with them on their journey the next day.

Judges 6:23 “Thou shalt not die”: When God discovered Himself to man and man did not curiously pry into forbidden things, God spared his life.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The coalition of Midianites, Amalekites and Ishmaelites had the Israelites on the run, hiding in dens and caves while they plundered their flocks and herds, pillaged their harvests, and set up their camps on Israelite land. They came like grasshoppers and consumed everything in their path. In a desperate but courageous attempt to provide food for his starving family, Gideon stomped out a bit of wheat (probably gathered at night in danger of his life) in a deserted wine press.

Exodus 17:14 “Book”: document; writing; letter; book or scroll, in which something is written for future use. This is the second mention of writing something down as a memorial: the statute or proverb that he gave at Marah and now the memorial concerning Amalek. It strongly indicates a scroll predating the Pentateuch, in which were written God’s dealings with His people from time to time.

Exodus 17:15 “Jehovah-nissi”: Jehovah is my banner. *Nissi* comes from the Hebrew root *nes* (pronounced *nace*), which means standard, ensign, signal, or sign. *Nes* is used in Numbers 21:8 as the word *pole*, on which the brazen serpent was erected for an emblem of salvation to the dying Israelites. Jesus later applied this symbol to Himself, as the one lifted up on the cross as our salvation (John 3:14). It is written “ensign” in Isaiah 11:10 as a direct prophecy of Jesus Christ. The only other place *nissi* is used is as “standard” in Isaiah 49:22, which also points directly to Jesus Christ. *Nissi* can also be translated as “miracle,” as “miracle” comes from the word for “sign.” *Jehovah is my miracle!*

LESSON BACKGROUND

Journeying from Marah, the children of Israel camped in a lush oasis called Elim; then came again into the wilderness where the third murmuring took place. Now they were dying of starvation. God sent quail for supper and the next morning manna—angels’ food; bread from heaven—appeared on the ground, a miraculous multivitamin power food that fell to the ground every day, excluding Sabbath days, for forty years, until they came to the borders of Canaan.

Coming to Rephidim, a desert wasteland, a fourth murmuring against Moses arose, again because of thirst. This time God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb, and floods of water, enough for over a million people and their flocks and herds, gushed out of the rock. (The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 10:4 emphatically stated, “that Rock was Christ.”)

While they were faint and weary, most likely from their thirst at Rephidim, the Amalekites ambushed them from behind, attacking the feeblest—probably the sick, the very young and the very old—of the company (Deuteronomy 25:17-18). Thus Moses, in defense not

only of the people of God but of the *cause of God*—the Amalekites “feared not God” (Deuteronomy 25:18)—initiated a fight against Amalek.

Who were the Amalekites? Genesis 14:7 relates that “all the country of the Amalekites,” along with other kingdoms, were attacked by Chedorlaomer and other confederate kings on the warpath. This was obviously in Abraham’s time, so either these were descendants of an earlier Amalek, or the writer was describing a part of the country which was afterward occupied by the Amalekites who later descended from Esau’s grandson, Amalek (Genesis 36:12). They were thorns in the sides of God’s people for generations, beginning with the attack at Rephidim. They joined the Canaanites in attacking the rebel Israelites who attempted forced entry into Canaan after God pronounced judgment on their unbelief (Numbers 14:45); they sided with the Ammonites and Moabites during the period of the judges (Judges 3:13); and were confederates with the Midianites against Gideon (Judges 6:3, 33). Saul was commanded to destroy them utterly, but disobeyed God, sparing King Agag (I Samuel 15:8; II Samuel 1:8). David dealt with them severely after they raided his home in Ziklag (I Samuel 30:18), and in Hezekiah’s reign an Amalekite remnant was destroyed by the Simeonites (I Chronicles 4:43). God’s declaration of judgment upon them in Deuteronomy 25:19 and Balaam’s prophecy, “Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish forever” (Numbers 24:20), was fulfilled at last when Haman, thought to be a descendant of King Agag, went to the gallows (Esther 7:10), and many enemies of the Jews were destroyed.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *History*: Briefly discuss the progress of the Israelites up to this point.
2. *Amalekites*: Relate their ongoing conflicts with the Israelites.
3. *The Rod of God*: Explain its significance.
4. *The Banner*: Of whom is it a type?

might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.

20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.

21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord GOD! for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovahshalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

MEMORY VERSE: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace —Ephesians 2:13-14

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In a time of oppression by Israel’s enemies, fear and turmoil was on every hand. The Lord appeared to

for you at the cross. Just simply present your need before Him there. As you once prostrated yourself at the cross in repentance of your sins, now prostrate yourself again in consecration to God's will for your life. Present your body to Him a living sacrifice, as Romans 12:1 exhorts Christians to do. Consecrate to die to self and crucify your fleshly desires. Then ask Jesus to *fill you* with His Spirit "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).

The final success of the Christian life will be contingent upon our *staying connected to the cross*, living in communion with, and following the guidance of the sweet Holy Spirit that administers the blessings of the blood that Jesus shed on the cross. We find our sanctification in embracing the cross and being always "delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11). Yes, it is here at the precious cross where we are washed and sanctified, as well as justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

FEBRUARY 24, 2019

JEHOVAH SHALOM—THE LORD IS OUR PEACE

Judges 6:11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What depths of meaning are in the details of this battle! Consider the analogy of the Amalekites and how they attacked Israel from behind. Isn't this just like the enemy of our souls—and I'm not just referring to the adversary, the devil, but our own FLESH and its desires—to catch us weary and tired or weak and sick, and try to attack us, deceive us, and carry us away captive? There's a temptation to give in to some weakness of the flesh, to pamper self, to pity self, to be distracted by the world, to be offended, to get lifted up—and the list goes on.

Various commentators have speculated about who modern-day Amalek may be: Hitler and the Nazis, Stalin and the Communists, Iran, or the Palestinians. I believe the Amalekites, descendants of Esau, who represents all things fleshly (remember how he gave up his birthright for food?), are definitely symbolic of what we might use several terms to describe: self, self-interest, personal ambition, ego, carnality, the flesh. "...Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Peter 2:11; see also 4:1-2; I Corinthians 9:27; Romans 8:1-18; II Corinthians 4:10-11; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:13-24).

How did the Israelites triumph? Was it their power or might? Was there some special power in the rod? Was it the presence of Moses, Aaron, or Hur? Was it because Moses held up his hands? The Israelites weren't skilled in battle; Moses, Aaron and Hur were just human, and there was nothing about holding up hands except for what it pointed toward: Moses held the rod in both hands and pointed it toward heaven! To remind them WHOSE battle it was, WHOSE people they were, and WHOSE Word they were to obey. And deeper still is the meaning of the uplifted rod: the Savior lifted up upon the tree. Jehovah my banner! Jehovah my miracle! Jehovah my victory! So today it is only through the Savior, only through Christ and Him crucified, can we have victory over our flesh. *We triumph through His cross*. Only as we suffer with Him, as we are crucified with Him, can we reign with Him.

There is a lesson also in the support and aid given by Aaron and Hur to help Moses keep his rod lifted up toward heaven. As through earnest prayer and trust in Christ our Savior we prevail, sometimes our strength gives out and we need encouragement and support.

Brothers and sisters, let us help each other keep the banner held up high! Let us encourage each other to look alone to Jesus, follow Him, deny self for His sake, suffer with Him. Let us hold up the hands of earnest prayer, self-denial, supplication and intercession.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

Unity of the Spirit was illustrated so perfectly in this lesson. The fleshly weakness of Moses could have lead to the Israelites' demise if it had not been for the assistance of Aaron and Hur. Ecclesiastes chapter 4, verses 10 and 12 state, "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. . . And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

This reminds me of the Golden Gate Bridge located in San Francisco, California. It is a large suspension bridge with the strength to accommodate the daily traffic of 110,000 vehicles. At first glance, the support cables look like fragile ropes. But, upon closer examination, you will find that this large cable consists of many small wires: 27,572 of them! One single wire would not be sufficient to support the weight of the bridge.

Similarly, we as saints cannot afford to be independent; strength is in number. We truly do need each other. Our weaknesses can be bolstered by our brethren. Unity of the Spirit brings perfection to the saints of God, growth to the Church, and victory over the enemy.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

FEBRUARY 17, 2019

JEHOVAH M'KADDESH—THE LORD WHO SANCTIFIES

Leviticus 20:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.

3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off

gratitude as I complete this lesson and consider the awesome discovery in these names! They are all pointing to Jesus Christ and what He has done for us at the cross! Thank You, Jehovah-El Roi, for seeing us in our great need; for finding us, lonely and lost on our desert way! Thank You, Jehovah-Jireh, for being the One who supplied such a great need by Your death on the cross—a substitute to take my place, redeem my soul, atone for my sins and provide the answer to every want I could ever have! Thank You, Jehovah-Rophe, for being the Healer of my soul and body; for your death on the tree that has changed my life from bitter to sweet and has delivered me from all the diseases, plagues and sorrows of sin. Thank You, Jehovah-Nissi for being my Victory, for being lifted up on the cross so I can look at You and be delivered from my enemy, Self. You are my Banner and my Miracle. Thank You, Jehovah-M'Kaddesh, for being the Lord who sanctifies me through the blood of Your cross and makes me holy and free from sin!

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

REFLECTIONS

*"In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine, a wondrous beauty I see;
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died to pardon and sanctify me."*

The concept of "the cross" goes together with the scriptural teaching that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, have been purchased at the price of Jesus' own blood, and we are not our own (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

The Holy Spirit is always ready to bestow any spiritual blessing we stand in need of if we just simply implore in faith at the cross. "There is grace for EVERY need at the cross." Perhaps you are a Christian who has had a definite initial experience of being "born again" and tasting the saving grace of God as you prostrated your soul in repentance at the foot of the cross. Yet, you have afterward found yourself struggling with selfish tendencies and weaknesses of the flesh. Like another old song says, "Have you by temptation often conquered been? Has a sense of weakness brought distress within? Christ will sanctify you, if you'll claim His best, In the Holy Spirit He will give you rest." Christ wants to grant you according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in your inner man. He wants to show you more of His saving fullness. It's waiting

Jehovah-M'Kaddesh is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and the blood of His cross, the laver of His Word and the fire of His Holy Spirit. "The Spirit, Water and the Blood agree, if we but understood, in making sinners pure and good, He takes their sin away."

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

DISCUSSION:

1. *Molech*: What was so horrible about the worship to this idol?
2. *Consequence*: What was to be done to those who worshipped Molech?
3. *Wizards*: What was God's law concerning them?
4. *Commands*: What did God tell His people to do concerning these things?
5. *Promise*: What did God promise He would do, what name did He apply to Himself at this time, and what other prophet called Him by this same name?
6. *Fulfillment*: In whom is the name Jehovah-M'Kaddesh revealed?
7. *Sanctify*: In what three ways does Jehovah-M'Kaddesh make His children holy?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The perversion, sorrow, and violence of idolatry are clearly represented by the terrible practice of child sacrifice, as described in the scriptures today. Matthew Henry offers this insight: "Are we shocked at the unnatural cruelty of the ancient idolaters in sacrificing their children? We may justly be so. But are there not very many parents, who, by bad teaching and wicked examples, and by the mysteries of iniquity which they show their children, devote them to the service of Satan, and forward their everlasting ruin, in a manner even more to be lamented? What an account must such parents render to God, and what a meeting will they have with their children at the day of judgment! In the midst of these laws comes in a general charge, Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*).

My heart is so overwhelmed with amazement, wonder and

from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.

4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not:

5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.

6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.

8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you.

Ezekiel 37:21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:

23b I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God.

24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

MEMORY VERSE: Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

—Hebrews 13:12

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God's people were specifically commanded to set themselves apart from false gods and idolatrous, heathen practices and be holy unto God, keeping God's statutes. Later after they had disobeyed, God promised to bring them back from their idols and the captivity to which they had been banished, and make them holy again by dwelling in their midst. He fulfilled this promise by Jesus shedding His blood upon the cross, writing His laws upon our hearts, and sending His Spirit into our hearts.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Leviticus 20:2 "that giveth any of his seed unto Molech": either to have adulterous relations with heathen idol worshippers, or to sacrifice one's child to the idol Molech.

Leviticus 20:3 "Profane my holy name": "By sacrificing to an idol, when sacrifice should be offered to God; and such a sacrifice as would cause the name of God, and his holy laws, and true religion, to be blasphemed and evil spoken of among the Gentiles" (*Matthew Poole's Commentary*).

Leviticus 20:5 "A whoring": to commit fornication; be a harlot; to commit spiritual prostitution.

Leviticus 20:6 "Familiar spirits": the root is from the word for a water bottle made of skins, referring to the muttering, chirping or hollow sound in their practice of seeking the dead for instruction. Another word for this is *necromancer*: "One who pretends to foretell future events by holding converse with departed spirits; a conjurer" (*Webster*).

Leviticus 20:7-8 "Sanctify": to be set apart; consecrated; hallowed; and so tabooed from profane use. "Holy": separate from human infirmity, impurity and sin; hallowed; a saint or holy person.

Ezekiel 37:23 "Dwellingplaces": seat; assembly; dwelling place; dwelling. Some translations have "apostasies."

Ezekiel 37:26: "Sanctuary": sacred place; holy place.

Ezekiel 37:27: "Tabernacle": dwelling place; specifically God's dwelling place.

Hebrews 13:12 "Sanctify": to make holy; consecrate; make holy; hallow; purify.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The phrase, "I am the Lord who sanctifies you," is expressed four times in the Old Testament law. First in Exodus 31:13, in commandments concerning the Sabbath day; again in the passage in our lesson concerning the worship of Molech and dealings with familiar spirits and wizards (Leviticus 20:8); in chapter 21:8 when He speaks of the priesthood, and again in chapter 22:32 in a commandment pertaining to the hallowing of His name: "Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the Lord which hallow you."

It was God's desire and plan to have a people entirely separated unto Him from the belief in, worship of, and immoral practices of, heathen gods and goddesses. Not only were His people to refrain from idolatry, but they were to rid the promised land of the people who practiced it; the groves of trees on the hillsides and the shrines and temples within them; the images—sculpted, engraven, or painted; the music, songs and dances; the wild, immoral feasting and revelry; and the violence which accompanied it.

Idolatry was full of the mental bondages of fear and superstition; slavery and class warfare; seances and witchcraft, consultation with spirits, fortune-telling, gloomy speculation about the afterlife and suicide. God's religion was one of spiritual freedom, joy, wholesome celebration, peaceful family life, healthy diet and hygiene, hope and peace about death, and compassion and equality for all people—whatever their nationality, skin color, gender or economic status—who would believe in and reverence God.

The verses from Ezekiel give us God's promise to His people which was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus and ultimately in the sending of the Holy Spirit. The fulfillment is not to be seen in some millennial age, in a literal land, with a literal sanctuary. Peter, in his message at Pentecost, definitely explained that "David" is Jesus Christ (as in Ezekiel 37:24). Many verses in the New Testament let us know that God's tabernacle is now His church, and He dwells in the hearts of the redeemed by the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Our memory verse so clearly brings out the fact that Jesus sanctifies us with His own blood. Jesus also says in John 17:17 that we are sanctified through His Word. Thus, the sanctifying power of