

SCRIPTURE STUDIES

VOL. XII, No. 8

OCTOBER
2005

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord..." Isaiah 1:18

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Scripture Studies (ISSN: 1520-4308) is edited by Scott Sperling and published ten times a year by Scripture Studies, Inc., a non-profit organization. It is distributed all over the world by postal mail and via the internet free of charge. If you would like to financially support the publication and distribution of *Scripture Studies*, send contributions to:

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Old Testament Study: Exodus 12-13

The Exodus from Egypt, pt. 1 by Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

³³And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, "We be all dead men." ³⁴And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. ³⁵And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: ³⁶And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. ³⁷And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. ³⁸And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle... ⁴¹And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt." (Ex 12:33-38, 41 AV)

⁵¹And it came to pass the selfsame day, [that] the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies. (Ex 12:51 AV)

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you." (Ex 13:19 AV)

At last was fulfilled the promise made by Jehovah to Abraham more than four hundred years before. He had said, "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13).

Literally had this been fulfilled. The experiences of Abraham's seed in Egypt was precisely as God had said. But He had also declared to Abraham, **"And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance"** (Genesis 15:14). This, too, was now made good. There were no provisos; no ifs or peradventures. **"Afterward shall they come out with great substance."** So God had decreed, so it came to pass. So had God promised, so He now made good His word.

"And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt" (12:41). Upon this verse we commented briefly in our last paper. Those who went forth from the land of bondage are here termed **"the hosts of the Lord."** Israel was the Lord's hosts in a threefold way: **First**, by covenant purpose, by the eternal choice of a predestinating God; **Second**, by creation, who had made them for Himself; **Third**, by purchase, for He had redeemed them by precious blood.

"And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies" (12:51). The last three words in this quotation show that Israel did not issue from Egypt as a disorderly mob. How could they, seeing that it was *the Lord* who **"brought them out"**! God is not the author of confusion. There is a supplementary word in 13:18 which brings this out in further detail: **"The children of Israel went up by five in a rank"** (margin) **"out of the land of Egypt."** A similar example of Divine *orderliness* is to be observed in connection with our Lord feeding the hungry multitude. In Mark 6:29 we are told that Christ commanded the disciples to **"make all sit down by companies upon the green grass"**. And we are told **"they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties."** The fact that Israel went forth by **"five in a rank"** exemplified and expressed God's *grace*, for five in Scripture ever speaks of grace or favor.

There is another word in Psalm 105:37 which adds a beautiful touch to the picture here before us. There we are told, **"He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."** How this illustrates the need of diligently *comparing* Scripture with Scripture if we would obtain the *full* teaching of the Word on any subject! Nothing is said of this in the historical narratives of Exodus; it was reserved for the Psalmist to tell us of this Divine miracle, for miracle it certainly was, that not a single one in all that vast host was sickly or infirm.

"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for he had

straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you” (13:19). This was no ancestor or relic worship, but an act of faith, the declaration of Joseph’s belief that the destination of Israel was to be the land which God had promised to give to Abraham and his seed, which promise the faith of Joseph had firmly laid hold of. During their long bondage in Egypt this commandment which Joseph gave concerning **“his bones”** must have often been the theme of converse in many of the Hebrew households; and now, by taking with him the embalmed remains, Moses showed his sure confidence that a grave would be found for them in the land of promise. Nor was his confidence misplaced, as Joshua 24:33 shows: **“And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem.”**

Hebrews 11:22 tells us that this commandment which Joseph gave was **“by faith,”** and here, hundreds of years after, we behold God’s *response* to the faith of His servant. Moses had much to occupy him at this time. An immense responsibility and undertaking was his — to organize the **“armies of Israel”** and lead them forth in orderly array. But in simple dependence Joseph had put his dying trust in the living God, and it was impossible that he should be disappointed. Therefore did Jehovah bring to the mind of Moses this command of Joseph, and caused him to carry it out. Blessed demonstration was it of the *faithfulness* of God.

But what, we may ask, is the *typical* lesson in this for *us*? Every other detail in the exodus of Israel from Egypt, as well as all that preceded and followed it, has a profound significance and spiritual application to us. What, then, is foreshadowed in Israel carrying the bones of Joseph with them as they commenced their journey across the wilderness toward the promised land? If we bear in mind that Joseph is a type of Christ the answer will not be difficult to discover. II Corinthians 4:10 gives us the N.T. interpretation: **“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our bodies.”** It is the power of the cross applied to the mortal body which ever craves present ease and enjoyment. It is only by **“keeping under”** the body that the *life* of Jesus (the new nature) is manifested by us.

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children” (12:37). “Rameses means ‘child of the sun.’ It was a fortress the Israelites, as slaves, had helped to build for the Egyptians. It was named after one of their great kings, whose remains, as a mummy, are now in the British Museum. He was the Pharaoh who oppressed Israel so cruelly, and the father of the Pharaoh who pursued the Israelites and was drowned in

the Red Sea. He was a great warrior; he conquered Ethiopia and other lands." Typically, Rameses speaks of that system: **'This present evil world'** (see Gal. 1:4), from which the grace and power of God delivers His elect, that system over which the mighty fallen angel, Satan, presides as Prince.

"So here, on the very threshold of their journey, we have a strange and wonderful parable — a picture that everyone who knows the rudiments of astronomy can appreciate. As the literal Israel was called out of the domains of the 'child of the sun' to journey to a land unknown to them, so is the spiritual Israel — the Church — called out from the realm described in the book of Ecclesiastes as **'under the sun'** — all this kingdom in which the planets ('wanderers') move in their never-ceasing revolutions around the sun — to go to that undiscovered realm, in which, because what of it is visible to the eye is at such an inconceivable distance from us that their movements can hardly be detected at all, we call them fixed stars — that calm, immovable heaven of heavens that we see gazing at us every night, unperturbed and untouched by anything that can occur in our solar system of wanderers, where our earth, like the rest, is a poor restless wanderer in a path that never arrives anywhere. How graphically Solomon describes all our life **'under the sun'**, its mirths, its cares, its toils, its joys, and its sorrows, as unceasing **'vanity and vexation of spirit'**!.... **'The thing that hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun'** (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

"To that **'third heaven,'** as Paul calls it (2 Corinthians 12), that Paradise altogether beyond and free from any of the influences of our planetary system, the believer is going. We belong not to the world. Chosen in Christ before this world's foundation, we belong to an eternal realm beyond and apart from all men's ambitions, schemes, philosophies, religions (see Ephesians 1:4-10).

"Such a calling *is* mysterious. No wonder Paul, even when in the very act of trying to explain it to us, lifts up an earnest prayer that a spirit of wisdom and revelation might be given us, so that we might be able to **'know what is the hope of His calling'** (Ephesians 1:18). It is all so new; it is all so unearthly; its doctrines, its maxims, its hopes and fears, its rules of conduct, are all so different to what is **'under the sun'**" (C. H. Bright).

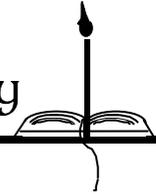
"And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth" (vs. 37). **"Succoth"** means "booths" or "tents." This spoke plainly of the *pilgrim* character of the journey which lay before them. This was one of the great lessons learned by the first pilgrim: **"Here have we no continuing city"** (Hebrews 13:14); for **"by faith he sojourned in the**

land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in *tents* with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise” (Hebrews 11:3). *Booths* are all that we have down here, for “our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). But, blessed be God, the day is now near at hand when we shall exchange our temporary “*tents*” for the eternal “*mansions*” of the Father’s House.

“And a mixed multitude went up also with them” (12:38). Very solemn is this; it was a wily move of the Enemy. Scripture presents him in two chief characters — as the roaring lion and as the cunning serpent. The former was exemplified by the cruel oppressions of Pharaoh; the latter, in what is here before us. Satan tried hard to keep some, at least, of the Israelites in Egypt; failing in this, he now sends some of the Egyptians to accompany Israel to Canaan! This “*mixed multitude*” would doubtless be made up of Egyptians and others of different nations who resided in Egypt. A variety of causes and motives might prompt them. Some, through intermarriages with the Israelites (Leviticus 24:10), and now loathe to part with their relatives; others, because afraid to remain any longer in a land so sorely afflicted with Divine judgments, and now rendered desolate and untenable; others, because quick to perceive that such wonders wrought on behalf of the Hebrews plainly marked them out as a people who were the favorites of Heaven, and therefore deemed it good policy to throw in their lot with them (cf. 9:20). But it was not long before this “*mixed multitude*” proved a thorn in the side of Israel. It was this same “*mixed multitude*” who first became dissatisfied with the manna and influenced Israel to murmur (see Numbers 11:4).

It has been well said that “when a movement of God takes place men are wrought upon by other motives than those by which the Holy Spirit stirs the renewed heart, and a mass attach themselves to those who are led forth.” Witness the fact that when God “*called Abraham alone*” (Isaiah 51:2), Terah (his father) and Lot (his nephew) accompanied him (Genesis 11:31). Witness the Gibeonites making a league with Joshua (Joshua 9). So, too, we find that after the Jewish remnant returned from the captivity “*a mixed multitude*” joined themselves to Israel (Nehemiah 5:17), though later “*they separated from Israel all the mixed multitudes*” (Nehemiah 13:3). So, too, we read of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7)! And these things are recorded for *our* “*learning*.” This fellowshiping of believers with unbelievers, this sufferance of the ungodly among the congregation of the Lord, has been the great bane of God’s saints in every age, the source of their weakness, and the occasion of much of their failure. It is because of this the Spirit of God says, “*wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate*” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

A Classic Study: The Danger of Prosperity



A Classic Study by William Bates (1635–1699)

[Here we continue a study by the eminent English Puritan William Bates, concerning the danger of prosperity. Mr. Bates is setting forth reasons that prosperity is dangerous to the believer.]—*Ed.*

The Danger of Prosperity, pt. 5

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. (Prov. 1:32, AV).

4. The prosperity of sinners usually renders the means of grace (which should reclaim and reform them) ineffectual, and consequently their destruction is remediless. The means of grace are internal or external: internal, in the motions of the Holy Spirit, and the convictions and excitations of conscience; external, in the ministry of the word, and the counsels of faithful friends; all of which are usually made frustrate and inefficacious by the vices and lusts of the prosperous. This occurs in the following ways:

a. Prosperity makes sinners more incapable of receiving the heavenly impressions of the Spirit, and obstinate in resisting his gracious working. The flesh and the Spirit are contrary (see Gal. 5:17), and accordingly as the carnal appetite has dominion and overrules in men, such is their opposition to his restraints from evil, or his motions to what is whole and good. The sensual have not the Spirit (see Jude 19). They willfully refuse to give admission to Him, when by inward impulses He solicits them; and they have a stubborn and active contrariety to His attributes and gracious operations.

He is styled “**The Spirit of power, and love, and a sound mind**” (II Tim. 1:7). He communicates a sacred sovereign virtue to the soul, whereby the irregular passions are reduced to the obedience of the sanctified mind, and the reigning power of sin is dissolved. He is a free spirit, and restores the soul to true and perfect liberty, by enlarging the will, and making it commensurate with the divine will: and from hence it is the inseparable character of a converted person, he is willing to do what God will have him do, and to be what God will have him be. But sensual persons, by the pleasant infusions of fervidity from the tempter, and carnal objects, have lost their power and desire of spiritual liberty, and resist the Holy Spirit when He offers to break the bands of their lusts. The Spirit in converting the soul, inspires it with heavenly love to God for the ever-satisfying beauty of His perfections; and from love proceeds intellectual delight in communion with Him, in affectionate ascents to Him, and His gracious

descents to the soul. But the sensual are fastened in the mire of their sordid pleasures, and can take no heavenly flight, and relish no divine comforts. The Spirit produces a sound mind, to judge sincerely of things as they are. And from hence the corrupting vanities of the world lose their attractive charms, and eternal things appear in their reality and excellency, and are chosen and sought with persevering diligence. But the sensual heart is a perpetual furnace, whose smoke darkens the mind, that it cannot discover sublime and heavenly excellencies; and whose impure heart fires the will, that it is earnest in the pursuit of fleshly pleasures.

Briefly, nothing does more quench the Spirit in His illuminating, quickening, and attractive operations, than sensuality: and nothing more heightens sensuality, and increases the averseness of carnal men to the holy Law of God, and makes their conversion more difficult than prosperity. Indeed, the Spirit of God can by effectual grace convert the most unprepared habituate sinner, the most obstinate enemy of holiness. He can melt the most rocky stubborn heart, into a holy softness and compliance with its duty, for creating power is of infallible efficacy. There are some objects and miracles of divine grace that are the everlasting monuments of its glorious power in subduing the most fierce violence of reactive to the extent of their power. The winds blow with all their force, and the sun enlightens the air with all its luster.

However, the Holy Spirit is an intelligent and voluntary agent, whose power in working is regulated by His will, and directed by His wisdom. There are some things repugnant to the divine attributes, that it is impossible God should do them: the apostle saith, that God cannot lie, for it is contrary to his truth, one of His essential perfections. And it is impossible that He should do anything unbecoming His wisdom. He threatened the sensual world, "**My Spirit shall not always strive with Man, for he is flesh**" (Gen. 6:3); that is, corrupt and indulgent to his fleshly appetites, and always opposing and controlling the pure motions of the Spirit. We read that our Savior "**could do no mighty works in his own country because of their unbelief**" (Mark 6:5): Not as if their infidelity abated His divine power, but they were unprepared to receive benefit by them, his miracles would have been cast away upon such unconvincible persons. Who will sow the barren sands, or water dead plants, or give a rich cordial to a furious patient that will spill it on the ground? And it is an act of justice to deprive sinners of those inspirations which they have so long resisted. Those who are tender and tractable, and unfeignedly resign up themselves to His conduct in the ways of life, shall receive more powerful influences to perfect the blessed work begun in them: "**He will give more grace to the humble**" (I Peter 5:5). But those who are so far from valuing His graces and comforts, that should be received with the highest respect, that they ungratefully despise them, and rebel against His motions and counsels, He righteously deserts. Stephen in his charge against the Jews to complete the aggravation of their sins, reproaches them; "**You stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart, and ears, you always resisted the Holy Spirit**" (Acts 7:51). The obstinate sinner rebels against

His authority, and condemns His mercy. The tempter with his charms is presently entertained, as the devils easily entered into the swine; but the Holy Spirit with His gracious offers is rejected. Wretched indignity! Rather to obey a slave and an enemy, than the lawful sovereign.

The saints grieve the Spirit of God by a willful neglect of His assisting grace, and fall into presumptuous sins. And as grief, when it is oppressing, causes the spirits to retire to the heart, and nature is as it were shut up in its springs, and obstructs them from communicating agility and vivacity in the ordinary operations of the senses: thus the Holy Spirit when grieved withdraws, and there follows a disconsolate eclipse and interruption of His reviving quickening presence. But the indulgent, habituate sinners, provoke Him finally to leave them to their own lusts. It is true, His deserting them is usually gradual, as in a consumptive person the stomach, the color, the strength decline by degrees, till nature sinks irrecoverably under the disease; so the motions of the Spirit in those who have often repelled them, are not so frequent and vigorous as before; His aftercalls are weaker, wasting, and dying every day, till His total withdrawing from them. How fearful and hopeless is the state of such a sinner? This spiritual judgment always proceeds from inexorable severity, and ends in the eternal ruin of sinners. For without the Spirit's supernatural working, they can never be renewed to repentance, never reconciled to God. They may for a time live in a voluptuous course, or follow the business of the world; and a little breath may separate between them and hell, but they shall at last die in their sins, in an unpardonable state forever. It is said of the Jews, **"They rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit, therefore He turned to be their enemy, and fought against them"** (Isa. 63:10).

b. The convictions and excitations of conscience are prevented, or made ineffectual by the prosperity of sinners. Conscience is the applicative mind that respects practice; it directs in our duty, both by inhibitions from what is evil, and by instigations to what is good; and by comparing our actions with rule, testifies our innocence or guilt, and approves or condemns us.

This intellectual ray was planted in us by the wise God in our creation, and extended to the divine law, the object and end of it, to keep us to our duty. And since our revolt, it is sanctified as the vital principle of conversion to God, the powerful means of rescuing the lapsed soul from its prostitution to the flesh, and recovering it to a temper of purity becoming its original excellence, and the relation to the Father of spirits. It is true, the law of God is the primary rule of our duty, and the Holy Spirit is the efficient of our renovation; but the enlightened conscience is the immediate rule, and the immediate mover of us to return to our duty. And if conscience, which is the eye of the soul, be covered with a film of ignorance, if it be blurred with the false glitterings of the world, if it totally neglects its office, or makes but a cold application of saving terrors that may control the licentious appetites, if it be disregarded, when it suggests and excites to our duty, the sinner is hardened and settled in his lost state. Now, prosperity ferments the sensual afflictions, that obscure the light of con-

science, that corrupt its judgment, that smother and suppress its dictates, or despise and slight them, so that it is powerless, though constituted God's deputy to order our lives.

Affected ignorance is the usual concomitant of sensual lusts: for the enlightened conscience will convince, and condemn men for their pollutions, and force them here to feel the beginning of sorrows, and thereby make them apprehensive what the issues and consummation will be hereafter, and this will cast an aspersion of bitterness upon their sweet sins, and lessen the full pleasure of them. From hence our Savior tell us, **"Everyone that loves to do evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved"** (John 3:20); that is, by the instructed and awakened conscience. Men love darkness to cover their nakedness and foul deformity. They are averse from knowing their duty, and will not search, lest they should discover such terrible truths that cross their sensual humor. The apostle foretells (in 2 Peter 3:5) that, **"scoffers should come in the last days, who are willingly ignorant"** of the beginning and end of the world, as if there were no Divine Maker of all things, who has the power to destroy them, and consequently no judge to whom men must be accountable for their disobedience to His laws: The assent to the most evident absurdity, that all things were and shall continue in the same tenor: and the cause of their willing ignorance is insinuated in the character that describes them, that they might walk after their own lusts, more securely, freely, and joyfully.

Sensual lusts do not only hinder men's search after knowledge, but obscure the light of conscience, and corrupt his judgment. There is such an intimate communion between the soul and body, that interchangeably they corrupt one another: the sins of the flesh sink into the spirit, and corrupt the moral principals, from whence the sensible conscience springs of good and evil. And the sins of the spirit, infidelity, incogitancy, error, security, break out in the deeds of the body, and make the flesh more outrageous in its desires. Paul declares that **"unto the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled"** (Titus 1:15). A purged heart is requisite for a clear mind; but where lust dwells, it taints and perverts the practical judgment, from whence so many disorders follow in life. The natural conscience in many cases, in its simple judgment of things, sincerely declares what is to be done, and what to be avoided; but when compounded and stained with a tincture of sensuality, it judges according to the desires. The rebellious Israelites in the wilderness are described, **"It is a people that do err in their hearts"** (Psalms 57:10): The heart was the erroneous fountain of all their miscarriages, and forty years instruction could do them no good. Those who are given up to carnal delights, and are in a confederacy with the gross senses, even their directive and judging faculty is carnal in its apprehensions. A reprobate mind, and vile affections, are naturally and judicially the cause and effect of one another. Even natural truths that are plain and bright are strangely darkened through the perverseness and crookedness of men's hearts, as is the essential distinction between moral good and evil,

between virtue and vice, and the belief of a judgment to come (that is inseparably connected with it). Men wish according to their carnal interest; and what they wish, they would fain believe; and as when there was **“no king in Israel, everyone did what was good in his own eyes”** (Judges 17:6), so if there were no after-reckoning, men would without the check of conscience, follow the wills of the flesh. Therefore they are atheists in desire, and if not seared by the pangs of a throbbing conscience, will be so in their thoughts.

The heathens cancelled the law of nature, and transgressed all the rules of duty and decorum; they securely indulged those lusts that are a derogation and debasement to the reasonable creature, and make men below men. The reason of this prodigious degeneracy was, their manners corrupted their minds. Paul charges the Ephesians, not to **“walk as the other gentiles, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who being, past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness”** (Ephesians 4:17-19). A dead conscience, and a dissolute life, are inseparable. And how many that are surrounded with the celestial beams of the gospel, are as impure and impenitent, as those in the black night of paganism? They stand at the entrance of the bottomless pit, yet do not smell the brimstone that enrages the fire there: the flames of their lusts, have seared their consciences to a desperate degree of hardness and insensibility. Of such the apostle speaks, **“But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time; spots they are, and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceptions, while they feast with you”** (2 Peter 2:12-13). They violated all the prescriptions and restraints of the natural reason, they had lost all the ingenuous bashfulness of the humane nature, and pleased themselves in their false licentious principles, whereby they endeavored to justify their actions, and set a superficial gloss upon their foul deformities.

Now, a seduced and seducing mind, make the conversion of a sinner most difficult. While the judgment condemns what the affections approve, men are not so invincibly and irrecoverably lost; the enlightened conscience is an earnest of their return to their duty. But when the Spirit is deceived, the flesh always prevails; and men are most dissolute, corrupt, and desperately wicked. Our Savior says, **“If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness?”** (Matt. 6:23). How disorderly and ruinous will the course be? **“If the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?”** (Matt. 5:13). If the conscience, that should be as salt to preserve the soul from tainting pleasure, be corrupted, wherewith can it be restored?

Fleshly lusts smother and suppress the dictates and testimony of the enlightened conscience, so that they are not influential upon the life. The

dictates of conscience are in a direct line, instructing and advising men in their duty: the testimony is by reflection upon their errors from the divine rule, and condemning them for their guilt.

Through prosperity, the dictates of the enlightened conscience are suppressed. It is the observation of the philosopher, concerning sensual persons, that they have reason in the faculty and habit, but not in the use and exercise. The practical understanding declares our duty, that it is absolutely necessary to obey God; and men assent to it in general: but when this principle is to be applied to practice in particulars that are ungrateful to the corrupt will, lust draws a veil over it, that it may not appear to check the sensual inclinations. While the mind, seduced by the senses, is intent upon the pleasing object, it does not actually and strongly consider the divine command; and conscience is brought under the control of the impetuous passions. The light of reason, as well as of divine revelation, discovers that the blessed beginning, and the happy end of man, is to be like God, and to enjoy His love; but when there is a competition between His favor, and the things of the world, the carnal heart suppresses the dictates of the mind, and makes a blindfold choice of things present and sensible, as if man were all earth, and there were no spark of heaven within him.

The heathens are charged by Paul that **“they hold the truth in unrighteousness”** (Rom. 1:18). The notion of God as the supreme lawgiver, and to be obeyed according to His law impressed upon conscience, was a natural truth, and should have reigned in their hearts and lives; but they would not suffer it to exert its power in ordering their actions.

The testimony of conscience is suppressed and neglected by the prosperous sinner. If conscience be in some degree righteous, and faithful in its office, and **“reproves him, and sets his sins in order before his eyes”** (Ps. 50:21); he will not regard its earnest warnings. He is as unwilling to hear that sincere witness in his bosom, as *Abab* was the inflexible prophet *Micaiah*; of whom he said, **“I hate him, for he does not prophesy good of me, but evil”** (I Kings 22:8). Prosperity affords many diversions, whereby the sinner shifts off conversing with the conscience, and remains engaged in his sinful state. **“I hearkened, and heard”**, said the prophet *Jeremiah*, **“but they spoke not aright; no man repented of his wickedness, saying ‘What have I done?’”** (Jer. 8:6). What foul, ignominious acts, how defiling and debasing of my soul, how offensive to the pure eyes of God, who is so glorious in majesty, and dreadful in power? Such a sight of sin would make the conscience boil, and chill the passions, and urge sinners to return to their duty. But while they prosper, they are obstinate in rebellion; **“every one turned to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle”** (Jer. 8:6). As the horse when enflamed, by the noise and other accidents of war, furiously rushes to his own destruction; thus sinners when they encounter alluring objects that divert the mind from serious consideration, either they do not discern, or will not observe the dangers before them, and with as little consideration, and as much fierceness as the beasts venture upon their own destruction. Conversion is the product of the most serious and sad thoughts, from which a prosperous sinner is most averse.

New Testament Study: Matthew 22:15-22



Render Unto Caesar

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap Him in His words. ¹⁶They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

¹⁸But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought Him a denarius, ²⁰and He asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?"

²¹"Caesar's," they replied.

Then He said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left Him and went away.

In the previous few sections, Jesus has been telling parables, directed primarily at the chief priests and Pharisees. These parables have been depicting the rejection of the prophets and the Messiah by the children of Israel, under the leadership of the chief priests and Pharisees.

The Pharisees, apparently offended by this, set to action: "**Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap Him in His words. They sent their disciples to Him along with the Herodians. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'**" (vss. 15-17). The Pharisees, knowing that Jesus was a man of wisdom, foresaw how difficult it would be to "**trap Jesus in His words**", so they saw it necessary to "**go out and lay plans**" of how to accomplish such a thing. It's somewhat unusual that religious leaders, who should guide people to the truth, would go out of their way to entrap someone in their talk. But the desire of the Pharisees was to discredit Jesus before the crowds, and possibly even get Him to say something for which He could be arrested.

Their allies, in this episode, were the "**Herodians**". The Herodians were "a party among the Jews, who were for a cheerful and entire subjection to the Roman emperor, and to Herod his deputy; and who made it

their business to reconcile people to that government” [Henry]. This alliance between the Pharisees and Herodians was quite surprising. The Pharisees (and indeed most Jews of the time) hated being subjected to Rome; the Herodians encouraged cheerful subjection to Rome. Only the common bond of strong opposition to Jesus could bring such diverse groups together in alliance. “How bitter the Pharisees’s hostility was [toward Jesus] is shown by their willingness to unite with Herodians” [Thomas, 320].

They try to hide their corrupt motives with flattery: **“Teacher, they said, ‘we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are’”** (vs. 16). Flattery can be a powerful weapon on mere men. Jesus knows the heart, though. “They are not genuinely seeking an opinion from Jesus; they speak flattering words to Him and proceed to ask a question aimed at destroying Him. That is not the action of honest men but of hypocrites” [Morris, 557]. Granted, what they said in their flattery was actually true. Jesus, of course, was a **“man of integrity”**, He taught **“the way of God in accordance with the truth”**, He was not unduly **“swayed”** by powerful, wealthy or influential men.

Having primed Him (so they thought) with flattery, they go on and ask their question: **“Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”** (vs. 17). They believed they had found the perfect question to trap Jesus. There was (seemingly) no answer He could make that would not get Him into some sort of trouble. If He said that it was right to pay taxes, the crowds would despise Him, for (by and large) they hated being under the oppressive power of Rome. No one really enjoys paying taxes. But the Jews of that time especially hated it, for it reinforced their submission to Rome. For the Jews, “paying the head-tax to Roman authorities was the most immediate and humiliating recognition of subjection to the heathen” [Broadus]. In fact, not too long before that, in the year AD 6, a revolt against taxation was led by a man named Judas of Galilee (not the apostle Judas). The historian Josephus (who lived at that time) tells us: “Under [Archelaus’s] administration it was that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords.” (Judas of Galilee is also mentioned in the Bible, see Acts 5:37). So, this subject was much on the mind of Jesus’ listeners. If Jesus said “yes” to the question, many (probably most) of his hearers would find it distasteful. “We may therefore be sure that among the easily excited crowds who filled the temple courts when Jesus was asked this question, there were many who regarded paying the poll-tax as the very badge of slavery to the heathen, and as treason against Jehovah, the theocratic king of Israel” [Broadus, 452].

On the other hand, if He said “no” to their question, the Herodians would, no doubt, seek to have Him arrested (which is what the Pharisees desired). The tax revolt of Judas of Galilee must certainly have put the Romans on-guard against any stirring of the crowds concerning taxation.

Note, the way that the questioners posed the question was very law-erly. They demanded a yes or no answer: **“Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”** They wanted the first word out of Jesus’ mouth to be “yes” or “no”. That one word would have caused a stir, giving Jesus no time to explain Himself further.

Jesus did not fall into their trap: **“But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, ‘You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?’”** (vs. 18). Jesus saw behind their stratagem, and instead of “yes” or “no”, the first words out of His mouth were: **“You hypocrites!”** “They hoped that they had disguised their real purpose so cleverly, that they must have been surprised to have the mask so quickly torn from their faces and to be exposed to public gaze in their true character as **‘hypocrites’**” [Spurgeon, 320]. “It is impossible to deceive the Lord; He knows the hypocrite, whatsoever [garb] he puts on... And He will let the hypocrite know some-time that He will not be mocked” [Dickson].

Jesus did not only see their trap, His masterful answer avoided the trap they were trying to set: **“Show me the coin used for paying the tax.’ They brought Him a denarius, and He asked them, ‘Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?’ ‘Caesar’s,’ they replied. Then He said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s’”** (vss. 18–21). Can there have been a better answer to the question? In a couple of sentences, Jesus clarified the whole matter; He settled years of controversy. Many of the Jewish people of the time felt guilty in paying the tax to Caesar’s government. They thought it was giving worship to Caesar, and thus, in violation of the first commandment. With His answer, Jesus put to rest all the guilt and apprehension they may have felt concerning paying the taxes. Give Caesar the coins! They are his. Look! His face and name are on the coins. God cares not that you give Caesar-headed coins to Caesar. Paying taxes is not an act of worship, but an act of civil obedience. “The Christian religion is no enemy to civil government, but a friend to it... It is the duty of subjects to render to magistrates that which, according to the laws of their country, is their due” [Henry].

Note well, that Jesus did not stop at the statement, **“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s”**. Importantly, He went on to say, **“...and to God what is God’s”**. Far more important than the question of whether you are giving to Caesar what is Caesar’s, is the question of whether you are giving to God what is God’s. And it is not mere coinage that God wants. It is hearts, souls and minds that God wants. As Jesus will say towards the end of this very chapter in Matthew: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment”** (Matt. 22:37).

We humans, most times, think way too small. We concentrate on the trivial, at the expense of the profound. We focus so much on where our coins end up, who will get our paper money. It sadly is the center of our lives: who ends up with our Ben Franklins. But God wants you to get your focus off your Ben Franklins, and to put your focus on His Son, Jesus Christ. He wants you to stop worrying so much about where you spend your pennies, and to worry rather how you are spending your life for Him.



A Topical Study: On Prayer

Pray for Everything, pt. 4 by Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)

[Here we continue a series on Prayer. This article continues a study by the great intellect of Stephen Charnock. In the study, he digs deep into Phil. 4:6. In the previous studies, he has been enumerating how we are to pray. He continues that here, by pointing out that we should pray in faith.]—Ed.

But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. 4:6, AV).

5. Pray in faith. This is frequently called for; and made the condition of effectual and prevailing prayers: **“What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them”** (Mark 11:24); **“Ask in faith, nothing wavering”** (James 1:6); **“All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive”** (Matt. 21:22). Our whole life should be a life of faith. By virtue of this, we should walk with God and man too. **“We walk by faith”** (II Cor. 5:7). We should also hear with faith (see Heb. 4:2), if we are to hear with purpose. And so, pay in faith, if we would prevail. But what is it to pray in faith? It requires particular application, a fiducial remembrance, or a general persuasion.

• • •

Since this is our duty, let us take notice of it, let us observe it, and make our requests known, and that **“in everything”**. Pray, and pray much and often, and pray carefully, and pray earnestly, pray spiritually, and in faith, and thus pray in everything. I might enforce this duty with many motives, but I intend not to stay on it. Mind these two:

1. *It is most honorable to God.*
2. *It is advantageous to us.*

1. It is most honorable to God, is as much for His glory as anything we can do. We can speak nothing more high and excellent, more noble and glorious or anything than this, that it honors God. This excels all, because it is the end of all. Everything is more valuable if it promotes this sovereign end, and therefore, prayer is most valuable because it most advances, and tends most to honor God. We can add nothing to the effectual and absolute glory of God; this is a glory which is infinite, to which nothing can be added. We have no way to glorify Him, but by declaring or acknowledging Him to be glorious, giving a testimony to His glorious perfections and excellencies.

Now, there is nothing we can do, does more declare the glory of God, than prayer; nothing that acknowledges more of His excellencies, and gives a clearer testimony to His glorious perfections. This gives Him the glory of: His immensity, and omnipresence, acknowledging He is everywhere, applying ourselves to Him, wherever we are; His omniscience, acknowledging He knows the desires of our hearts, and understands best of all what is best for us; His power, acknowledging He can do whatever we would have Him, exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; His goodness, that He is willing to hear such vile creatures, to supply, relieve, support, deliver, save to the utmost; His dominion, that He has right to dispose of all things, as His own; His providence, that He rules and orders all, good and evil, small and great; His justice, that He is ready to revenge His elect that cry; His truth and faithfulness, that He is mindful of His word and promise, the ground of all our requests; His all-sufficiency, that there is enough in Him for us, to satisfy, enrich, whatever our condition at present happens to be, more in Him than in all things, since we seek to Him more. **“Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me”** (Ps. 50:23). That which is said of one part of prayer, is true of the whole; He that offers praise, glorifies Him. If we would honor Him much, glorify Him in everything, let us in everything make our requests known.

[We will conclude this study in the next issue, D.V.]



A Study in Wisdom: Job 1:1 (pt. 1)

[Here we begin a reprint of a small portion of Joseph Caryl's study in Job. Mr. Caryl wrote twelve volumes on the book of Job. His study is a great example of how deep one can dig into the truths of the Bible.]

Job 1:1 - Who Was Job?, by Joseph Caryl (1602-1673)

¹There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.

This chapter may be divided into three parts: whereof the first contains a description of Job in his prosperous estate, from the first to the end of the fifth verse. In the second we have the first part of Job's affliction, set down from the sixth verse to the end of the nineteenth. In the third, Job's carriage and behavior in, or his conquest and victory over that first trial are discovered; this concludes in the three last verses of the chapter.

The description of his prosperous estate is given us in three points. First, What he was in his person, (verse 1); secondly, what he was in his possessions (we have an inventory of his goods - verse 2, 3, 4); thirdly, what he was in his practice of holiness (verse 5), where one example or instance is set down for all the rest.

The book begins with the description of his person in the first verse: where Job is described by that which is accidental, and by that which is essential. By accidentals, so he is described by the place where he dwells, "**There was a man in the land of Uz**". 2. By his name, "**whose name was Job**". The essentials are four qualifications, which were essential to him, not as a rational man, but as a holy man. "**And that man was:**

1. **Perfect**
2. **Upright**
3. **One that feared God.**
4. **Eschewed evil."**

As they who write the acts or stories of great men, usually give us some description of their persons before they set down their undertakings or achievements (as you see in *1 Samuel 17:4,5,6,7*, how the great giant Goliath is described), so here the Holy Ghost by the pen-man of this book, being to record a glorious combat, and combat with not flesh and blood

alone, but with principalities and powers, a wrestling with mighty and strong temptations: first gives us (if we may so speak) the *analysis of this divine heroes soul, the lineaments and abilities of his spirit*. This was the height, and this the stature of the combatant, such were his limbs, and such his weapons, there he dwelt, and this was his name.

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.” That refers us, either to the truth of the story, or to the time of the story. Such a man there was, that’s certain. Such a man there was but the time when is uncertain. It refers us to the time only indefinitely. There was such a man, but when, is not exactly and precisely set down. The Scripture (we know) does often keep an exact amount of years. The Scripture is the guide and key of all chronology, and sometimes it leaves things in general for the time, and only faith thus much such a thing was, or such a person was. So here. Yet some have undertaken to define (what the Spirit of God has left at large) the precise time wherein Job lived; and tell us in what year of the world these things were done. But I desire not to be so accurate, unless the rule were so too. Only thus much we may safely say, that Job lived between the times of Abraham and Moses, and nearer Moses than Abraham, and for that I conceive there is ground sufficient. There are these two special reasons, why it should be circumscribed within that limit.

1. Because Job offered sacrifice at that time in his own country: which after the giving of the law, and setting up of a public worship, was forbidden all, both Jews and Proselytes. They that were acquainted with the ways of God knew they must not worship by sacrifice anywhere, but before the Tabernacle, or (after the temple was built) at the Temple.

2. Because in the whole book there is not the least print, or the least mention of anything, which did concern those great and glorious passages of Gods providence towards the people of Israel, either in their going out of Egypt, or in their journey through the wilderness to Canaan. Now in a dispute of this nature (such as was between Job and his friends) there would have been frequent occasion to have considered and instanced some of those things. There is scarce any book in Scripture, that bears date after that great and wonderful dispensation of God, but it makes mention of or refers to some passages concerning them.

Again for the time, that which some collect to clear it, is from the genealogy of Job, there are three special opinions concerning the line of his pedigree.

One that he descended from Nahor, who was brother to Abraham, (Gen 22:20). It was told Abraham, beheld Milcah thee has born children to thy brother Nahor, Uz his first-borns and Buz, his brother. This Uz who was the first-born of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, is conceived to have given denomination to the land of Uz, and so from him, Job to be descended.

Another opinion there is (maintained by many) that Job was of the line of Esau, and that he was called Jobab by Moses, (Gen 36:33). **“And Bela**

died and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead." This Jobab, who was a descendant or one of the Dukes of the line of Esau, they say was Job. But why the name Jobab should be contracted into Job, I see little reason offered.

A third opinion for his descent is that he came from the children of Abraham by his second wife Keturah, (Gen 25) where it is said, that Abraham by her had divers sons, and that he gave them portions and "**sent them eastward into the east country**"; and from Midian, (who was the fourth son of Abraham by that second marriage) our genealogies do positively and directly affirm, that Job was descended. That may suffice for the time, for bringing of him within a narrower power limit, I have no grounds but conjectural.

He is not called "**A man**" (here) barely as the philosophies animal rationale, as man opposed to a beast: Not barely is he called a man to distinguish his sex, as a man is opposed to a woman. But there is somewhat more in the expression, he is called a man by way of excellency. And for the clearing and opening of that, we may consider that there are three words in Scripture original by which "**man**" is expressed.

1. Man is called *Adam*. That was the proper name of the first man, and it became the common name for all men since. So man was called from the matter of which he was made, Adam, from Adam, because (as the reason is given, Gen 2:7) "**God made man dust out of the earth, or as we translate) of the dust of the earth.**"

2. Man is called *Enosh*: So he is called in regard of the infirmities, weaknesses and sorrows, which he has contracted by sin, since the fall, sin made the red earth weak and brittle earth indeed, earth moistened with tears, and mixed with troubles.

3. He is called *Ish*, which the critics in that language say comes from and has alliance with two words: One signifying being, or existence, and the other heat or fire. So that the excellency of man's being, the heat, courage and spirit that flames in him is set forth in that word; and that's the word here in the text, "**There was a man**", it is *Ish*, an excellent, a worthy man, a man of an excellent spirit, a man of men, a man fitted to honor God and govern men. And that is it so used in Scripture, I will give you an instance or two, that you may see it is not a bare conjecture.

In Psalm 49, David, as it were, summons and divides mankind. In the first verse he summons, "**Hear this all you people, give ear all you inhabitants of the world.**" In the second verse he divides, "**Both low and high, rich and poor together.**" The word in the Hebrew for *high*, is *Bene-Ish*, sons of *Ish*, and the word for low is *Bene-Adam*, sons of *Adam*. If we should translate the text directly, according to the letter, the words must run, *sons of men and sons of men*, for sons of Adam and the sons of *Ish* are both translated sons of men. Yet when they are set together in a way of opposition, the one signifies low and the other high; and so our translators render it according to the sense, not sons or men and sons of men, but

low, and high. Junius translates to this sense, though in more words, as well they who are born of mean men, as they who are born of the honorable.

A like instance we have, "**The mean man bows down, and the great man humbles himself**" (Isaiah 2:9). The mean man, that is, the son of Adam, and the great man, the son of Ish; the great man in regard of his excellency, is by such a circumlocution described to be more than a man: not only the son of man, but the son of an honorable and great man. So I find the word diverse times used to signify the excellency and greatness of the person.

Then further, it signifies not only a man that is great, but it signifies a man in authority. "**There was a man**", that is, an excellent man, a man of word; "**There was a man**", that is, a man in authority. It signifies a magistrate, and so in diverse places of Scripture, man is put for a magistrate, especially when it is expressed as here, by Ish, "**Carry a present to the man**" (Gen 43:11), i.e., to the governor of the country. Go through Jerusalem and "**search, and see if you can find a man**" (Jer 5:1). What were men so scarce in Jerusalem at that time? Was there such a dearth of men, that a man could not be found? Surely no. Jerusalem had throngs of men in every street. The meaning then is explained in the words following, "**if there be any that executes judgment**", that is, if there be a Magistrate, a public man, that's the man I mean.

So in Numbers 27:16, we find the word to signify a Magistrate, "**Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.**" "**A man**", that is, a Magistrate, for there that's the essence. If you read the text you will find it, *a man in authority, and man fit to rule*. And that is it, which is meant in Acts 17:31, concerning Christ. "**God**" (says he) "**has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world by that man, whom he has ordained.**" It notes Christ the man in power, in authority, because all power in heaven and in earth is committed to him. So you know it was usual among the Romans to call their Magistrates by the name of *The men*, as the *Triumviri*, the *Septemviri*, the *Decemviri*, to call them sometime the *three-men*, sometime the *seven-men*, sometime the *ten-men*. Those who were the special men in authority, that were men in place and eminency, they carried away the name of men (as it were) from all men, as if they were the only men.

So that we have these two things to take notice of, when it is said here, that Job was a man, you must carry it further than the word is ordinarily taken: He was a great man, he was a man in authority, a magistrate. Some carry the Magistracy so high, as to set him on a throne, affirming that he was a king, a point very much contended for by diverse expositors; but that he was a magistrate in authority, a chief in his country, is clear by that which is expressed of him in Chapter 29, where he speaks of his deciding men's rights and executions of justice.

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Christ's Presence Today

"It is indeed eighteen hundred years since Jesus Christ walked here on earth, but this is certainly not an event just like other events, which once they are over pass into history and then, as the distant past, pass into oblivion. No, His presence here on earth never becomes a thing of the past, thus does not become more and more distant--that is, if faith is at all to be found upon the earth; if not, well, then in that very instant it is a long time since He lived. But as long as there is a believer, this person, in order to have become that, must have been and as a believer must be just as contemporary with Christ's presence as His contemporaries were. This contemporaneity is the condition of faith, and, more sharply defined, it is faith."

-- Soren Kierkegaard

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