

QUESTIONS ON PROPHECY (2)

Is the antichrist a seventh king, a Nero, who will ascend from the bottomless pit?

The beast out of the sea comes up out of the bottomless pit, and will, as eighth, be the ruler over the restored Roman empire (Rev. 17:11). His activities will resemble, if not surpass, those of Nero. The antichrist will set up his image (Rev. 13:14-15) and honour him as the God of fortresses (Dan. 11 :38), but he himself will not be the antichrist.

Will Russia invade Israel at any moment?

The attack by Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal, described in Ezekiel 38, follows the description of Israel's reestablishment in the land. Chapter 37 describes how Israel will be enjoying the everlasting covenant. It is not, however, necessary that what precedes in the sequence of chapters will also precede in the sequence of time. Scripture often treats events in a moral rather than a sequential order.

There are only two possible times for this attack: it must either precede or follow all other battles that will take place during the period preceding the Millennium, for they come when Israel dwells in safety (38:14). At the end of Russia's battle the Lord says, "And My holy name will I make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not suffer My holy name to be profaned any more" (Ezek. 39:7). It is not conceivable that the Lord would say this prior to the antichrist's placing himself in the temple, which, according to Daniel 9, causes God to send His rod, the desolator (the "king of the north"), The Lord also says that Russia attacks "His people." But the Lord will not call Israel this before He comes to reign over them; before that time they are "not His people" (Hosea 2). The language of Ezekiel also indicates that the Lord personally defeats Russia. How could this possibly be true if this battle precedes the presence of the antichrist? For these reasons it is not possible that Russia's battle would be the first one.

There are besides some other practical reasons why this order of events is impossible. Russia, the "king of the uttermost north," would have to go through the country of the "king of the north" without devastating that country. This could only be true if they were allied, but the "king of the north" is not mentioned among Russia's allies in Ezekiel. It would also mean that the weaker one would attack after the stronger one had been defeated, which is most unlikely. Besides, God uses the "king of the north" in judgment over Israel: he is God's rod (Isa. 10:5). How could God's rod come over His people once the Lord is present with them?

There are also moral reasons why I believe that Russia will come down after these battles and that the battle in Ezekiel is the last one before the Millennium enters its full glory. The Lord, in His dealings with mankind, has through the ages tried man under every conceivable arrangement: without government, with government; under promise, under law, under grace; and these in various ways. Similarly, the battles of the end-time will each have their own character. The "king of the north" is God's rod of anger over His people because they prefer the antichrist to His Son. The antichrist will lead the apostate Jews, the Roman beast the apostate Christian world, and the nations from the east come under the direct lead of Satan's unclean spirits — demon worship (Rev. 16:14). Beyond all these battles, one type is missing: a battle in which man comes without Satan's prompting, compelled only by the evil in his own heart, without the "benefit" of the great deceiver — ungodliness. Such a battle will be found in Russia's attack, if it takes place after Satan has been bound.

For these reasons I believe that the events of Daniel 11 will precede those of Ezekiel 38 and 39. One may look prophetically at the reigns of David and Solomon; both typify the Lord's reign. Before He reigns as the King of peace, He reigns as the true David, dealing with His enemies and fighting God's battles. Then the Russian army will attack Israel. After this battle the Lord, as the true Solomon, will extend His rule beyond Israel to encompass the whole earth. Then Israel will enjoy the thousand years of blessing under the Messiah, whom they will have recognized as the One who died for their sins.

Will God fulfil His program and begin the Millennium by the year 2000 AD?¹

God has not given us deadlines for His plans, particularly not for the period of grace, which began after the Lord's resurrection and will end with the rapture. For the comfort of believers during the Great Tribulation (not for those who belong to the Church, for they will then be with the Lord), the Lord has said that period will last forty-two months. But this is the only time specified for things to come, apart from the length of the Millennium itself. Some make much of Peter's comments that with the Lord a thousand years is as one day, but Peter also said that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years. Peter is saying that time is not for the Lord what it is for us. We need time for our actions; the Lord speaks — and it is there. Besides, Peter did not say that with the Lord a thousand years is one day, but is as one day. It may be true that the Lord will begin His Millennium by the year 2000 AD, and there are scriptural patterns that suggest this. But such thoughts remain speculation on our part, for He has not told us so. It is as if we are looking at the work of an artisan. We see what he has done, he has told us a bit about his work, and now we notice some of his actions and say: "Look, now he is going to do this." A little later we notice we were mistaken, for the simple reason that we are not skilled in his work and do not know it intimately. We may happen to guess right and, if we have been long studying his trade, it may be a well-educated guess. But only the craftsman knows for sure. We remain onlookers at the Lord's work who can only repeat with confidence those things He has told us in His Word.

The End

THE HOLY CITY, JERUSALEM (2)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Revelation 21:9-22:5

That Revelation 21 from v. 9 onward is kind of an appendix, referring back to what has been treated earlier, is not so unusual as we might first think. It is done quite often. In some of my books I have one or more appendices, to deal more extensively with points I had earlier only treated summarily to avoid losing the theme of my subject. We found in chapter 20 only a few lines about the position of the heavenly saints during the Millennium. Therefore we find in 21:9-22:5 a more detailed description of the Church of the living God in the Millennium.

In this appendix of the Revelation, the Holy Spirit describes the place, and therefore the glory, that the Assembly will have in connection with the thousand year realm of peace. Today we live in the kingdom of the heavens in its present state of confusion, because the Lord has been rejected and rules from heaven. In the Millennium, however, He will, as King of Israel and Son of Man, not only rule over the earth, but also *upon* the earth (Mt. 25:31; Ps. 8; Jer. 3:17). The Assembly will reign and judge with Him (1 Cor. 6:2-3). 1 Corinthians 15:24, however, says that the Lord "gives up the kingdom to Him [who is] God and Father; when He shall have annulled all rule and all authority and power." Although I am convinced on the basis of Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 8:11; and Daniel 2:35, 44; 7:14, 18, 22, 27 (and other places) that the kingdom in the Millennium will be the kingdom of the heavens, Matthew 13 distinguishes an earthly part — the kingdom of the Son of Man — from a heavenly part — the kingdom of the Father (vv. 41, 43). Then, even on earth "every knee will bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord..."

In eternity, however, there will no longer be a mediating government. God will dwell on a new earth in the midst of men — all who have turned to God during their life on earth, having confessed their sins and guilt: all who have been born again. Even then will the Assembly have a special place; she will be there as the tabernacle of God in which God will dwell. We do not read, however, that she will then reign. All who dwell upon that new earth have through their new birth received a new sinless life and no longer possess sinful flesh. The devil will then have been cast into hell, so that he can no longer deceive anyone. So no one will do anything against the will of God. God can therefore dwell in their midst, and a mediating government, as we find in the Millennium, shall be no longer needed. In the Millennium, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus, will indeed reign, but He will do so as Man — the King of Israel, the Son of Man — over the entire earth, and even over the entire creation (Ps. 8 and Heb. 2:7-8; Eph. 1 :20-22; 1 Cor. 15:24-28). But at the end of the Millennium, He will deliver the kingdom to God the Father, so that God (the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) will be all in all.

¹ *Note that this issue of Come and See was originally published in October 1982 and while the "day of grace" has lasted for more than another 30 years since this question was addressed in the magazine — Hebrews 10:37 tells us: "For yet in a very little while, He Who is coming will come, and will not delay", so we must still expect His return at any time — for believers, this should be our constant desire — to see Him, soon — but for those who haven't come to Him in repentance and accepted His finished work on the cross as the only way to be redeemed to God, then the time left is so much less than it was then! Please don't wait!*

Revelation 22:5 says, however, "They shall reign to the ages of ages." And 2 Peter 1:11 speaks of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is therefore also an eternal government!

Going back now to the Millennium, we find in the verses we are considering the way in which the Assembly is portrayed and her position during that time. "Come here, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in [the] Spirit, [and set me] on a great and high mountain, and shewed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Rev. 21:9-10). In Revelation 19 we saw who the bride, the Lamb's wife is; there we saw the marriage of the Lamb. The bride, mentioned there, we find also in Ephesians 5:25-32: "Christ also loved the Assembly, and has delivered Himself up for it, in order that He might sanctify it, purifying [it] by the washing of water by [the] Word, that He might present the Assembly to Himself glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things" (vv. 25-27). Then Paul applies Genesis 2:24, God's Word in connection with the creation of Adam and Eve, to Christ and the Assembly (see also 2 Cor. 11:2, 3).

Now we find her position in the Millennium. As the bride, the Lamb's wife, she has come to earth with the Lord Jesus, He having come to destroy His enemies. Ephesians 1 implies that she will reign with Christ: God has determined to put the whole of creation under the feet of the Lord Jesus, as Son of Man. The Assembly will reign with Him then, because, being His body, she has been made completely one with Him, as presented in Ephesians 1:23. That is her position which, although in prophetic imagery, nevertheless completely clear, is presented to us here.

We may recall John 17:22-23, where we read that the world will soon, when we come with the Lord to the earth, recognize that the Father has loved us as He loved the Lord Jesus. How will the world know this? Because it will see us (in our glorified bodies) in the same glory as the Lord Jesus. Philippians 3:21 says that we, believers, "await the Lord Jesus Christ [as] Saviour [from the heavens], who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory." This is not conformity to the body which the Lord Jesus had while He was on earth, but to that which He has now, now that He is glorified in heaven. That will be the character of our bodies when we come with Him from heaven.

Here in Revelation 21 we find a description of that glory. It descends from God out of heaven. It is therefore of a heavenly character: heaven is its home. It comes from God, and is therefore divine in origin. According to 2 Peter 1, we have received the divine nature; other places in God's Word tell us that the Lord Jesus has become our life (for instance, Col. 3:4); and some verses in 1 John say that we have received eternal life. 1 John 1:2 and 5:20 say that the Lord Jesus as Son of God *is* eternal life.

It is also said of the Bride that she has the glory of God. The world will see in her the glory of God. To a certain degree it can see it now (1 John 4:12), but that is only true to the extent in which our new life can be seen by the world in our manner of living. Then it will be perfectly so: our entire manifestation will show forth God's glory. Even our appearance will do this and, since we descend from heaven, the world will see it. How that will be exactly, I cannot say, for we are not told that the New Jerusalem will rest upon the earth. It does say, however, that she will reign over the earth.

When we read on, it seems as if the Holy Spirit searches for expressions to impress us with the greatness of the glory of that city. In verse 10 it says that she has the glory of God. But the Holy Spirit uses many other images which also portray the glory of God. In verse 11 we read: "Her shining [was] like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone." Going back to Revelation 4:3, we note that jasper typifies the divine glory as it can be seen outwardly by creatures. We find the revelation of that glory in creation in Ezekiel 28:11-17, where the glory of the devil before his fall is presented. We find it too in Exodus 28:15-21, 29, in the stones of the breastplate carried by the high priest upon his breast when entering the holy place. The Lord carries His own upon His heart when He, as our High Priest, appears before God (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:26). Today that glory is seen in us to the degree that we become the living expression of the divine nature, our new life. In verses 18-20, we find once more these precious stones.

The gold is also a type of the divine glory and righteousness; it is mentioned in verses 15, 18, and 21.

In verse 12 we see that the city had a great and high wall. She is completely separated from all that can hurt or defile her, as well as completely safe from all the powers of her enemies (Isa. 26:1). The twelve gates by which one can enter are guarded by twelve angels. Angels are mighty creatures, but they are ministering spirits, sent out on account of those who shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). These mighty creatures (one of which killed 185,000 soldiers in one night — Isa. 37:36) will ensure that nothing enters that is incompatible with the glory of the heavenly city. The wall itself was built of jasper (v. 18); we have seen that jasper speaks of God's glory, so the glory of God itself will be her protection. In this high wall will everything and everyone that approaches the city see that glory, which is so great and glorious that it is not possible for anything or anybody who is not of God to enter the city. What security! As far as the twelve gates are concerned, we should look at Ezekiel 48:30-35: Would this indicate that the restored, earthly people of Israel are the executors of the government which proceeds from the heavenly Jerusalem? (See also 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22: 30.)

Then we come to the foundations of the city. The foundation of the Assembly as the temple of God has been laid by the apostles and prophets (cf. 1 Cor. 3:10; Eph. 2:20). Here in Revelation 21 we find their names on the twelve foundations. Notice that Paul is not included. It isn't that his work was less important than that of the twelve; he has through the grace of God revealed the entire truth of the Assembly as the body of Christ, the highest character of the Assembly. But in this chapter we do not find the Assembly as the body of Christ. It has rather the character we find in the first chapters of Acts: the reorganized seat of the heavenly authority, the new, and now the heavenly, capital of God's government.

"And the city [was] pure gold, like pure glass" (v. 18). Among the objects of the tabernacle we find some of gold, and some of "pure gold." Where pure gold is mentioned it typifies the Lord Jesus. When the word "pure" is missing, it speaks of believers. Gold speaks of divine glory and righteousness. But on earth this is not found in a perfectly pure form. Only the Lord Jesus was "God... manifested in flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). All that was seen with and in Him, was the perfect revelation of God. In heaven it will be so with us as well; then we will be like Him (1 Jn. 3:2): whether viewing us or Him, the world will see the same glory (Jn. 17:22-23). As will be seen from the precious stones and the gold that is so often mentioned here, in the Millennium we will be the revelation of God in all His glory, insofar as it can be seen by men and angels — perhaps it is better to say creatures. His glory in itself we cannot see unless He reveals it. 1 Timothy 6 says, "[He] only has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen, nor is able to see." But He has revealed Himself in His Son who became Man to reveal Him. Now since we have received the Son as our life and have been fully united with Him as Son of Man (John 14:20), the Assembly will be the revelation of God's glory during the Millennium.

To be cont'd

VERILY, VERILY (8)

—J. van Dijk

John 13

In this chapter the Lord uses the words "Verily, verily" four times. The first two of these contain directions for all disciples at all times. The latter two deal strictly with the circumstances in the upper room where the Lord and the twelve were together. This does not mean that these last two do not contain lessons for us, for we can always profit from the Lord's dealing with His own, no matter how personal these dealings may have been. He loves us as He loved them; we are no different than they were.

The Lord spoke these words to His disciples when Judas was still among them. Not all disciples are born again: Judas was not! The thing disciples have in common is that they all say that the Lord Jesus is a Teacher worth following. Some may do so for personal gain, some because they like the Christian tenets (be good to your neighbour, show love, etc.), but others follow the Lord Jesus because they have acknowledged their own sinfulness and the necessity of the Lord's shedding His blood to wash away their sins. Only the latter have life from God. The Lord addressed the remarks we are now considering to a mixed company consisting of born again and not-born again persons. We must keep this in mind.

In verse 16 we read, "Verily, verily, I say to you, The bondman is not greater than his lord, nor the sent greater than he who has sent him. If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them."

The Lord used the occasion of the footwashing to speak these words. Though Lord and Teacher, He had washed the feet of the disciples, and afterwards instructed them to do as He had done. Then the Lord added these words which contain a principle that disciples ought never to forget.

The Lord had said this before, but then in connection with the persecution the disciples would experience. If He had been slandered and evil-treated, they should not expect better things for themselves, for they, being bondmen, did not stand above their Lord (Mt. 11:24). They would experience these trials whether they wanted to or not.

Now the Lord spoke of their *attitude*. Their behaviour should not be as if they were of more importance than their Lord. The Lord called them His bondmen, a name Paul would later frequently use when speaking of himself. The word infers that the individual belongs entirely to the one who is his lord, in this case our Lord Jesus.

It's no wonder; He has created us, and on that basis we belong to Him. This holds true for every man and woman. Mankind, however, has been rebellious, not wanting to own any obligation to his Creator. Therefore man in general does not behave as a bondman of his God. There are some who seem to acknowledge that God has a claim on them, but they

seek to follow the Lord on their own terms. Yet others have acknowledged their rebellion and, having seen that they could never have paid for their guilt, believe God who tells them that for those who believe the penalty for sins has been paid by their Lord on the cross. Although both groups are disciples, only the latter has been redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus. They have become bondmen in a double sense: first, because they are His creatures, and second, because He bought them with His blood.

Now the Lord tells His disciples that they are not greater than He is. But isn't that obvious? Yes, but it is a reminder to us of who we are (for we are just as the disciples); the Lord would never have said it if we would not at times forget this simple truth. We tend to think so much of ourselves that we all too quickly forget even such an obvious thing as that we, as bondmen of the Lord, are not more than He is.

The Lord had not washed the disciples' feet because there was something wrong with their feet. They simply had become dirty while walking in this world. That does not happen just sometimes; that happens *all* the time. Every time one walks the dusty streets, the feet become dusty: in a spiritual sense, defiled. No one escapes it; all need washing daily. It isn't hard to see that we should not wait for an infection to show itself, for then we are already too late. No, the footwashing is needed time and time again, whether or not there is any evidence of evil affecting us from walking in this world.

But how can we wash our brother's feet? What is our water? Scripture shows us that the Word of God is our water (Eph. 5:24). How do we apply it? Don't we need a great amount of skill to use it effectively? But think: in literal footwashing would we need to know exactly which molecule of water would have its cleansing effect on which dust particle? Of course not. We would merely pour the water over the feet and it would clean them. I believe that this also applies in a spiritual sense. If it was a highly skilled task, only well-trained and knowledgeable persons could perform it. It is, however, a charge to all. So when you meet your brother, be occupied with God's Word, consider it, and it will, through the Spirit's working, have its proper effect upon your brother — and yourself. It will then be a matter of washing *each other's* feet.

But the Lord continues. He speaks of the ones who are sent. The Lord was sent by His Father, and He constantly testified of Him and spoke of things concerning Him. Later (Jn. 20:21) the Lord said, "As the Father sent Me forth, I also send you." if we are well aware of this, we will not fail to wash the feet of our brothers and sisters. It is a task from which we do not get a holiday. We are not more than our Lord who has sent us. He worked continually and we, as the sent ones, may follow His example.

Then follow the verses in which the Lord speaks of Judas who, despite the intimate fellowship he so long enjoyed with the Lord, "lifted up his heel" against him. Those who are not born again among today's disciples do the same thing. They seem to have communion with the Lord, but in reality they will not obey Him. Although Judas' action surpasses all others in evil, there is a similarity between what he did and what those do who say, "Lord, Lord," but who have not really surrendered to Him. With a "kiss" they take leave of Him who wants to be their Saviour, when it becomes a question of facing the awful necessity and the blessed sufficiency of His cross for their salvation.

Then the Lord spoke once more these attention-getting words:

"Verily, verily, I say to you, He who receives whomsoever I shall send receives Me; and He that receives Me receives Him who has sent me" (v. 20).

The Lord sends us to wash one another's feet. But this requires activity on the part of him who is sent as well as of him who is to receive. Sad to say, there is often a lack of preparedness to receive each other and to spend time together around the Word; we are too busy with other things. If we find ourselves in this situation, we had better think once more of these words. The Lord spoke them in the last hours before His death: they must be important! They have to do with the death of the Lord. We know that we who have believed have died with Him. But if our feet are not washed, if we do not receive the one who comes to do so, it will not be long before we get infected feet: we will not be able to walk as we ought to. The inevitable defilement of the world will have its effect and we will no longer behave ourselves as those who have died with Christ. It is directly related to His death — and therefore most important! But this is the negative side.

On the positive side is the blessing attached to receiving our brothers. The Lord looks at it as if we receive Him personally. Who would not like to receive the Lord in his home? All who love Him would no doubt say, "I wish He would come to my home as He did to that of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha." Well, He still desires to do so, but He comes in your brother or sister who comes as sent by Him to wash your feet. Are we ready to receive them?

It is ultimately, the Lord said, a matter of receiving God. Can you imagine some calling themselves Christians, yet refusing to receive God? It happens! Perhaps the consideration of these verses will cause some of our readers to mend their ways.

Then God, looking down, will be able to say of them what He said of others in Malachi 4:16. "They that feared Jehovah spoke often one to another; and Jehovah observed [it], and heard."

Then in verse 21, the Lord spoke these words again: "Verily, verily, I say to you, that one of you shall deliver Me up."

What a sadness must have been in the heart of the Lord. He had washed this disciple's feet, He had continually presented him with God's thoughts about Himself, but it had all been to no avail. The Word of God finds no entrance with those who have no life from God. They consider it to be no more than the word of wise and devout men: worthwhile to follow where it suits them. Where it does not suit them, it is simply declared "not for our time." Treated in this fashion, the Word of God has lost all its authority over their lives, and its cleansing effect will not be experienced.

Most serious in the Lord's remark are two small words: "of you." It's sad enough that anyone allowed himself to be used for the awful deed of delivering the Saviour to death. But it was not just anyone, it was "one of you." The worst enemy is found among the disciples. This is still so today. Among those who claim the Name of Christ are found those most dishonouring to His name.

How serious are these things! Such persons possess God's Word, they claim to have fellowship with Christ, but they do not bring the doctrine of Christ. In their arrogance they say things that contradict the simple truths of God's Word, thereby hindering others to come to Christ. By so doing, they place themselves in the class of which 2 John 10-11 gives us a clear instruction: "Do not receive him into [the] house, and greet him not; for he who greets him partakes in his wicked works."

Reading quickly, there may seem to be a similarity between the last occasion in which the words "Verily, verily" are used in this chapter (v. 38) and the one we just considered. Yet the distinction is great:

"Verily, verily, I say to thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice."

In the case of Judas, it was the love of money and an entire lack of love and care for the Lord that drove him to his despicable act. With Peter it was different; he loved the Lord. He was later able to tell the Lord this, and even say to Him that since He could see the very bottom of his heart, He knew that Peter loved Him. True, his love was small. Perhaps it was only detectable by the One who knew all things. Perhaps it hardly deserved the name of love and Peter did not want to use the word for perfect, divine love (*agape*) which the Lord had used, but it was love. But Peter did not know the limited extent of his love. The Lord, therefore, allowed him to come into circumstances in which he would learn how limited his love for the Lord really was.

Have we already learned how small our love for the Lord is? Or do we still think that we would be able to endure all for Him? Our small love for the Lord will cause us to act or speak as if we do not know Him when Satan confronts us with a difficulty. We do not speak out when we should, we unexpectedly give in to temptation. It happens more often than we think! All that is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23), and sin is lawlessness (1 in. 3:4). Each time we do not take our orders from our Lord, when we forget that we have a task and get involved with the things we like rather than with the things we are told to be occupied with, we act like Peter!

Do we weep bitterly when we find out that we have failed, or is that something we no longer do? I think I will stop here. To write these things causes me to reflect; I believe it would be good if each of us spent some time in quietness with our Lord.

To be cont'd

QUOTE

The "man of God" who was deceived by the old prophet would have had security in the divine principles had his soul been alive to them (1 Kings 13).

—From Woollen and Linen by J. G. Bellett

TO BE CHRISTIAN, EVERY DAY (3)

—K. Rouw

Deuteronomy 22:1-12

A Mother's Faithfulness

6. "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree, or upon the ground, with young or with eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:

7. "Thou shalt in any case let the dam go, and thou mayest take the young to thee, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days."

It may strike many of us as odd that these verses permit us to take the eggs or the young out of nests. We were sure taught differently!

Let us first observe that countless passages in the Bible teach us to show loving care to animals and birds, just as God shows love and care for them. Even the young ravens don't rook anyone: God feeds them. The farmer too is told to show loving care in his dealings with his cattle. Unbelievers who are familiar with ancient legal codes acknowledge that they seldom contain such tenderness and softness towards animals as the Mosaic Law.

Our God is a holy God, but His nature is Love. Think, for instance, of the instruction not to slaughter a mother and its young on the same day (Lev. 22:28), or of the command, "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk" (Ex. 23:19; Dt. 14:21).

Now, to understand this verse about bird's nests we must take ourselves back in time to surroundings with plenty of birds and game, in which it was normal to live by hunting. Today in many countries, nature is entirely changed by building and construction. It is hardly a hundred years ago that one morning's catch could be from 120 to 180 squirrel skins in a country like Holland. Today this is unthinkable. Even in countries such as Canada and the United States, pelting and hunting are closely controlled. Of the sparrows that were sold two for a farthing, not one was forgotten by God, the Lord told us. God gives us the cow's calf and the chicken's eggs for food. This is a principle: life through another's death. But that is not the issue in this verse.

The thing that strikes us most is that the mother bird may not be taken. Wouldn't it have flown away? Wasn't it scared when we approached the nest?

This is precisely the point: the mother bird often remains on the nest! In this case, mother-love is greater than self-love. At times one can simply take a brooding bird from the nest, count the eggs, and put the mother down again.

How scared that mother bird must have been when we came so close... when she was touched... yet she did not fly away. She guarded over her eggs, her unborn young. Such a mother must be let go "in any case." Then what does the mother do? She flies away, heavenward, just as the bird with blood on its wings in Leviticus 14. It is the reward for a mother who has risked her life for her children, which may not even have hatched yet. That is a mother's love and a mother's faithfulness — certainly a lesson for our godless and loveless age.

I would like to ask you, mothers and young women, to make a decision before God regarding *abortion*: *Never!* (Unless, upon the advice of a doctor, it is seen to be the only means to save one or two lives. Otherwise, it is murder!)

In this passage, God wants to teach us that which is the very opposite of abortion. "Can a woman forget her sucking child...?" God asks. Yes, that happens, nowadays by the thousands; there are mothers who let children who live from their life's blood be killed. Because God knows how deeply man has fallen, He says: I know. "Even these forget, but I will not forget thee" (Isa. 49:15). Great is His faithfulness.

Was not the Lord Himself the example of loving care in the words He directed at Jerusalem? "How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings." How beautiful are the Old Testament examples God has given us of mothers who kept their little ones under their wings as long as possible. Think of Jochebed who, as long as she could, kept her little boy hidden from Pharaoh, under her wings. She endangered her own life before she entrusted him with much care to life's current, where the enemy surrounded her boy. When she afterwards, as through a miracle, received her little Moses back to her knees, he was allowed to take in the love of God and His people together with his mother's milk.

We may also think of Hannah, who was allowed to keep little Samuel under her wings till she could deliver him to an environment where outward piety was accompanied by immorality and godlessness. As far as she was concerned,

however, she did not deliver her child to these surroundings, but "lent" him to Jehovah. Such children, born during difficult times, but at home nourished under wings of godly care, become the leaders of God's people.

God has created the eagle's nature so that it "stirreth up its nest, hovereth over its young, spreadeth out its wings, taketh them, [and] beareth them on its feathers." And so God leads His people. He instructs the fathers and mothers and teachers to do the same. Those who in this "wait upon Jehovah shall renew [their] strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Dt. 32:11; Isa. 40:31).

It is always charming to see mother birds with their young: a duck with a parade of downy fluff following her, a regal pair of swans with their grand retinue. "Look, the Lord made them," says mother to her *two* little ones — and the dog. How sad: the *dog* cannot be raised for Heaven. How great is the danger that even in this the spirit of our time puts its seal upon the Christian family. There is no more room in this world for a large family; the once endearing expression "nest full" has suddenly become contemptible.

In Psalm 84 "the sparrow hath... a house," and we have the House of the Lord. But "the swallow [has] a nest for herself, where she layeth her young, Thine altars [there I want to leave my children], O Jehovah of Hosts, my King and my God." And so I want to entrust all the children Thou givest me to Thee.

To be cont'd

QUOTE

Let Christ be fully before us, and every right feeling will be engendered in our heart. We may be grieved for Him, but our hearts will walk as His did through the world.

—J. N. Darby

STUDY CORNER (8)

Are you ready for our last series of questions? Here they are:

85. The Holy Spirit has united all believers in one Body, the Assembly, and they are exhorted to maintain practically what He has formed spiritually. Quote the verse which tells us to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit."

86. Quote two verses which show that the Scriptures, God's Word, are a sufficient guide for His people.

87. Who teaches the believer all things?

88. Where in the Bible does the Apostle Paul exhort believers to be like-minded, setting before them the Lord Jesus as their pattern in humility?

89. Quote the verses in Luke's Gospel which give the account of the institution of the "Lord's Supper" by the Lord Jesus.

90. What two things were on the table for which the Lord Jesus gave thanks?

91. Of what did the Lord Jesus say these two things were to remind the believers?

92. Right after the Assembly was formed at Pentecost, what four things marked those who composed it?

93. Where did these believers break bread?

94. On what day of the week did the early Christian assembly at Troas (with the Apostle Paul present) gather to break bread?

95. How long is the Christian Assembly to remember the Lord Jesus in His death?

96. If believers come to the Lord's table without self-judgment, to what do they expose themselves?

97. Which act is a symbolic expression of the oneness of all Christians? Quote a verse that tells us so.

98. Why do Christians break bread?

99. Quote a verse pointing to the day of the week on which we should break bread and one speaking of the frequency of doing this.

These are the last questions. ~~As promised, the ten best responses will receive a copy of *The Church of the Living God*. This can only be after all responses to this last series of questions have come in, which should be no later than November 30.~~ In our next issue we will name the book out of which we took these questions. May the Lord bless you all.

OUTLINES FOR BIBLE TEACHING (8)

15. JACOB IN DISTRESS: HIS MEETING WITH ESAU AND JOURNEY TO BETHEL — Genesis 33:1-35:29

Outline

1. Reconciliation with Esau Gen. 33:1-17
2. Reparation for Dinah's defilement Gen. 34:1-33
3. Journey to Bethel Gen. 35:1-15
4. Rachel dies at Benjamin's birth Gen. 35:16-17

Explanation

1. God made Esau disposed to reconciliation, and so saved Jacob (Ps. 145:18-19).
2. Simeon and Levi's violent deed caused fresh anxiety for Jacob.
3. It was "Jacob," not "Israel," who was reminded by God to return to Bethel (Gen. 28:19-22).
4. While at Bethlehem, the birth of a second son caused the death of Rachel. In her agony she called him Benoni; Jacob, however, called him Benjamin.

Lesson

Jacob's life was not as peaceful as Abraham's, because he was not as faithful and pure (Phil. 4:9). At Bethel Jacob had learned who God was; for that reason he had to return there to build an altar. The Altar at Shechem was defiled through uncleanness and idolatry (35:4). He had to build a new altar, thinking back to that condition in which he had lived previously. Then he took the following steps:

- a. He included all that were with him (35:2),
- b. Purified everyone from everything that could disturb their fellowship with God,
- c. Returned to Bethel,
- d. Built an altar, and
- e. Worshipped.

After Jacob had taken these steps of repentance, God could grant him spiritual revival; God called Israel by his new name and renewed His promises. Then they journeyed to Bethlehem where Rachel gave birth to her son. She is here a type of Israel in its pangs to bring forth its Messiah (Micah 4:9-10a). Benoni means "Son of my affliction," Benjamin "Son of the right hand."

16. JOSEPH'S DREAMS; JOSEPH SOLD — Genesis 37

Outline

1. Joseph's youth and dreams Gen. 37:1-11
2. Joseph is sold Gen. 37:12-30
3. Jacob's mourning Gen. 37:31-36

Explanation

1. Joseph was the object of his father's love. He was called to a high destiny. The dreams were meant to make this known to all in the home. Envy and hatred were shown by his brothers.
2. Joseph's brothers made an attempt on his life to thwart his exaltation. God intervened through the arrival of the merchants.
3. After selling Joseph, his brothers lied to their father and deceived him. Jacob mourned, "refusing to be comforted" (Jer. 31:15).

Lesson

Joseph brought his father an evil report of his brother's, not out of a desire to tattle on them, but because he hated evil. The brothers are a type of the Jews who lived in the time of the Lord's life upon earth in their hatred and enmity (Jn. 1:11).

Joseph is a type of the Lord in testimony through his condemnation of evil (Jn. 7:7). Additional examples of Joseph's serving as a type of the Lord are:

- a. Both were special objects of a father's love (Gen. 37:3; Mt. 3:17; Jn. 3:35; 5:20).
- b. The brothers of both rejected them and delivered them to the Gentiles (Gen. 37:8, 18, 28; Mt. 26:3-4; 27:2).
- c. Both were (whether in intent and figure or literally) slain by their brothers (Gen. 37:18, 24; Mt. 27:20-26).
- d. Both became a blessing to the Gentiles and took a Gentile bride (Gen. 41:1-45; Acts 15:14; Eph. 5:25-32).
- e. As Joseph reconciled his brothers to himself and afterwards exalted them, so will it be with Christ and His Jewish brethren (Gen. 45:1-20; Dt. 30:1-10; Hos. 2:14-18; Rom. 11:1, 15, 25-26).