

**JUDE (4)**

—H. L. Heijkoop

*Beloved, using all diligence to write to you of our common salvation, I have been obliged to write to you exhorting [you] to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints (v. 3).*

The word *beloved* is derived from the Greek word *agape* and has therefore a connection with verse one. Jude loves them because they are the objects of God's love. "And every one that loves Him that has begotten loves also him that is begotten of Him" (1 Jn. 5: 1). This is true brotherly love. It does not love someone because of his pleasant character traits but because he is the object of God's love. At the beginning of his epistle he wants to distinguish them clearly from the ungodly about whom he starts to write in verse 4. He does not love the latter because there is nothing in them that can arouse his love. On the contrary, he hates them, for he sees their destroying the work of God (cf. Gal. 1:8-9; 1 Cor. 3:17; Ps. 139:21-22).

*Using all diligence to write to you of our common salvation,*

The word *salvation* occurs in such verses as "The glad tidings of your salvation" (Eph. 1: 13), or in "God's power to salvation" (Rom. 1: 16), and in "And salvation is in none other" (Acts 4:12 ) as well as in other places. These places show that the meaning of the word is not restricted to what we call the gospel, i.e. forgiveness of sins for everyone who repents. It also speaks of all that God wants to give and will give to everyone who accepts the Lord Jesus during the time in which the Assembly is being called out. Besides forgiveness of sins the word has also reference to our being taken into favour in the Beloved, which means that to God we are as acceptable as the Lord Jesus. Before God we stand in that favour in which the Lord Jesus stands as the One who wrought the wonderful work on the cross through which God is so exceedingly glorified. God loves us as He loves the Lord Jesus (Jn. 17:23). The Lord was the One "who did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). We are by one offering perfected in perpetuity (Heb. 10:14), made fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light (Col. 1:12-13). Even now we have boldness for entering into the holies, into the presence of a God who is a consuming fire (Heb. 10:19; 12:29). The Lord is the Son of God, Heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). We are sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:14-17). The Lord is now glorified and in Him we are made to sit down in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6), and soon we will be forever *with* Him in the Father's house (Jn. 14:1-4). Even now we may have fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 Jn. 1:3), through the power of the Holy Spirit living in us (Jn. 4:14). Soon we will receive a body made into conformity to the body of glory of the Lord Jesus (Phil. 3:21). Then the purpose of God will be entirely fulfilled, and we will be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He will be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). Then "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 Jn. 3:2).

This is the salvation offered to us in the gospel. We will only possess it completely once we have a glorified body and reign with the Lord over the universe (1 Pet. 1:5). Therefore, salvation in Scripture is usually presented as a future thing, though not always. Through faith some believe that they possess the salvation of their souls even now (1 Pet. 1:9), counting as their present possession the things which God will give them only later; Scripture speaks also of such as having salvation (Eph. 2:48).

This salvation is the part of *all* true believers from the cross and till the rapture of the saints. Jude had this salvation in common with those to whom he wrote as well as with us. It is the *common* salvation, just as Paul had a common faith with Titus (and us — Ti. 1:4). Anyone thinking of this salvation cannot keep silent about the unparalleled history of God's love. And anyone who has received a gift of the Lord for the edification of the Assembly is prompted by his heart to speak or write of it so that all believers might learn to understand how rich they are. Thus they will have "perfect joy" (1 Jn. 1: 4). This is true edification through the service of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:13-14). Jude too experienced "all diligence" to write about these things.

*I have been obliged to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly*

The tense of the word *write* contrasts with the tense of the same word in the previous sentence. Here it signifies that the writing of this letter had to be done immediately and not to be postponed. It was not a welcome task; the necessity was laid upon him. The power of the Holy Spirit, which was to guide his pen, forced him to write about other things than his

heart desired. This beautifully displays how the Word of God has been given to us. Jude desired to write about our common salvation, but the Holy Spirit wanted him to write about something else and moved him to do so, not in his own words but in words which the Holy Spirit gave him (1 Cor. 2:13). He had to occupy himself with the opponents and the apostates, to describe them in such a way that the believers would recognize them and would be on guard against them.

When Satan, through his henchmen, has penetrated into the Assembly and is actively undermining and corrupting the foundation of the Truth, it is useless to speak about building up. At such times, God calls to battle, for only through warfare can His work be accomplished then.

Jude wanted to write about things which are comforting and pleasant to the hearts of the saints, but the circumstances called for alarm and serious warning. This never is acceptable to all! Timid souls are frightened by the least sign of controversy; they prefer to cover things up. They plead for peace and softness, fearing the dangers of conflict for the souls. But is it love to souls, and (more important) is it love to God, to allow the enemies free rein when Christian Truth is at stake? Did not David do more than anyone for the well-being of the people of God when Goliath challenged the legions of Israel, and blasphemed God? And who did more for the blessing of the believers in Antioch, Peter, who, in view of judaistic Jewish believers, denied the truth of grace by refusing to eat with believers from the Gentiles, or Paul, who openly opposed and rebuked him? To stand aside, under the pretense of keeping the believers from harm, when God calls for combat is nothing short of gross selfishness (cf. Judg. 6:16-17, 23). In Nehemiah 4 we read that the builders built with one hand and held a sword in the other. He that sounded the trumpet was near Nehemiah. When he blew the trumpet, everyone had to stop rebuilding and strengthening the wall, for they had to come and withstand the enemy in dependence upon the Lord.

This is what Jude did! He understood the teaching of Numbers 10 quite well, including verse 9 of that chapter. The silver trumpets in Numbers 10 are God's testimony in the midst of His people. They were of silver; the sounding voice of Him who paid such a great price for His own. Silver speaks of the price paid for redemption (Ex. 30:11-16; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; 1 Cor. 6:20). The sons of Aaron, the priests, were to blow the trumpets. "And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before Jehovah your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies" (Num. 10:9). Though the trumpet was blown in the midst of the people so that everyone could hear it and come for the battle, it was not primarily meant to gather them, but to secure the help of God who would defeat the enemies. We may count on this: "And ye shall be remembered." Abijah experienced this in 2 Chronicles 13:12-15. Saul did not understand this; he blew the trumpet in 1 Samuel 13:3 saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." His thoughts were not on God. He called the people by the name God's enemies had given them; a name God never used. We see the sad results of it in that chapter.

The Greek word for *contend* was originally used for a wrestling match. The New Testament uses this picture in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 1 Timothy 6:12. The former verses give the thoughts contained in this word very clearly. It is to have a single goal, to give up everything for it!

*For the faith once delivered to the saints.*

Here, *the faith* is not a personal belief or a condition of soul, but the whole Truth that is to be accepted in faith. Thus, it is not the Spiritual power that accepts the testimony of God, but rather the testimony itself.

Most times this can be distinguished in the Greek through the use of the article. Generally when it says *faith*, the personal faith is meant, but when it says *the faith* then the Truth of faith, the whole of Christian teaching, is meant. In most cases the context reveals the right meaning. Here it says that the faith has been delivered to the saints once; that could only point to the Truth, the Doctrine (Galatians 1:23; 3:23, 25; Philippians 1:27 and other places use the word in the same sense). *Once* (*hapax*) means here "once for all." In 2 Corinthians 11:25; Philippians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:18 (and perhaps also in Hebrews 9:27) this Greek word is used with another meaning. But in all other places (Hebr. 6:4; 9:26-28; 10:2; 12:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:18; Jude :3,5), it is used in the sense of something that only happens once and which either cannot, or will not be repeated.

In everyday conversation a *saint* is understood to be a sinless person, but God's Word means something different by it. There to be a saint (or to be holy, hallowed, sanctified — all of which are translations of the same Hebrew root: *gadash*) means to be separated for a certain purpose from the things wherewith one had so far been connected. A saint is someone who takes such a separated position (e.g. 1 Chr. 23:13; 26:27; Jer. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:21).

All who are truly born again are holy from the moment the work of grace began in them. They had been members of the world, the human society, whose prince and god is Satan, and by whom the Lord was rejected and crucified. When they

repented, judging themselves as lost sinners, the Holy Spirit created a new life in them. This was their new birth; through it they were separated from the world. In John 3:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2, the Holy Spirit is seen as the One who brings about this holiness. In 1 Peter 1:2 and Hebrews 10:10 (cf. Rom. 8:30), the will of God the Father is mentioned as the source and Hebrews 10:10 says that it is through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. So we see that the whole Godhead took part in this work.

But when was *the faith* delivered to the saints? We find that answer in the Epistle to the Galatians. "But before [*the*] faith came, we were guarded under law, shut up to [*the*] faith [which was] about to be revealed. So that *the* law has been our tutor up to Christ, that we might be justified on the principle of faith. But, [*the*] faith having come, we are no longer under a tutor; for ye are all God's sons by [*the*] faith in Christ Jesus. For ye, as many as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek; there is no bondman nor freeman; there is no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:23-28; see also 4:1-7). Wherever the Greek has an article before *law* or *faith* in these verses, it is put here in italics, otherwise it has been left out.

It is quite evident that two dispensations are presented here. First, the time during which *the faith* had not yet come, this time was characterized by law (without article, thus not the law of Sinai; it was a time characterised by being under a law thus a time of bondage, minority). The context of the words "we" and "ye" in Galatians 3:25-29 and 4:3-9 etc. shows that "we" refers to the believing Jews. During the time which was characterized by law, they were under *the* law as a tutor. During that same time the Galatians were Gentiles, and therefore not under *the* law, for *the* law had only been given to Israel. Moreover, during that time they were not believers and thus not heirs (Gal. 4: 1). The believing Jews were under *the* law until the time came which is characterized by *the faith*.

During this time of *law* the believers were, as far as their position is concerned, equal to slaves (Gal. 4:1-3). They were really heirs and will receive their portion with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this respect there was no difference, for conversion and new-birth are the same in all dispensations. But they were, as minors, not aware of their inheritance and could not enjoy it. They were in bondage under the first principles of the world: *the* law. How long did this situation last? Till *the faith* came.

The second period is characterized and known by *the faith*. Now faith is characterized by the invisibility of the things believed in: "Now faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

As said, the first period was first of all the time of minority, of bondage. Secondly, in that period the believers were not merely ignorant of the position of believers, they did not possess it. Thirdly, all things connected with the period were visible. These are three characteristic distinctions between it and the period of faith. Thus (in contrast with the second period) it was marked by the visibility of all things connected with this time period. The law of Sinai is for *natural* men on earth. Consequently, there was a visible temple with a visible worship and visible sacrifices. A visible high priest was clothed with a beautiful robe. The law prescribed in the smallest details what had to be done and what not. The blessings, which were material and earthly, were conditional upon obedience (Dt. 28). A visible leader led them through the wilderness.

The second period (that of faith) is characterized by the full knowledge of God Himself (Jn. 1: 18) and of the things God's grace gives to man (salvation), and by the ability to take practical possession of this salvation. Besides this, it is marked by the invisibility of everything that is connected with faith: a spiritual temple, worship in spirit and in truth, a heavenly High Priest and Advocate, spiritual blessings, and an invisible Leader (God the Holy Spirit) who lives in every believer as well as in the Assembly as a whole. Those who have part in this are seen as having died with Christ, but now quickened and raised with Him and seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6).

Thus, all things in this second period must be accepted in faith, for all is spiritual and invisible to the natural eye. The Holy Spirit works in the soul *that energy of grace* whereby one accepts these spiritual, invisible things, and receives the assurance of them. Of course the *things we accept* must be revealed by God, for they are invisible and spiritual. Both this *energy of grace* and the *things we accept* are called faith in Scripture, as has been stated before. The first is usually written without, the latter with the article. These two things cannot be entirely separated from each other, for where there is nothing to be believed, there can be no faith. But when there is no article, the emphasis is put upon the condition of the soul, the personal faith. When there is an article, the thought is more the total of all that is believed, all that God has revealed.

What then is *the faith*? It is what God has revealed as the object of faith for this period of faith. According to Galatians 3:27, in connection with Romans 6:3, this time period began after the death of Christ, in actual fact in Acts 2, for only then the Christian baptism was applied for the first time. Galatians 4:6 and many other places confirm this, for they show it to be connected with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And so *the faith* is what God has revealed in Christianity; it consists of

the contents of the whole New Testament *after* the Gospels, of the Gospels themselves only insofar as the Lord has therein revealed things concerning the Assembly, and the Old Testament in its types and shadows of spiritual things of the New Testament.

I am not referring to the character of God's Word! The entire Bible is God's Word; having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, it has authority and is profitable for teaching, conviction, and instruction. The Old Testament is no less the Word of God than the New Testament. This is, however, not in question in Jude. Jude deals with that Truth which God has revealed for this time, the Christian doctrine revealed by God in His Word. In general, it consists of all the mysteries mentioned in the New Testament: the mystery concerning Christ and the Assembly (Eph. 5:32), the mystery of Christ (Eph. 3), the mystery of the Gospel, the mystery of faith, the mystery of God, the mystery of Godliness (1 Tim. 3:16) etc. (see 1 Cor. 2) and all that is connected with these. For the New Testament refers to something as a mystery if it was unknown in the Old Testament but has been revealed in the New.

This faith then has been once and for all delivered to the saints. This was done before Jude wrote his letter. It is one divinely revealed whole and as such it has been delivered to the saints to be kept, to be used, and to be cared for as entrusted treasure. It neither needs nor tolerates additions, development, or departure (Gal. 1:8-9), no adjustments to modern thoughts and feelings (which would only amount to corruption of the Truth). It is permanent, irrevocable and, like the One who revealed it, unchangeable. Consequently, we must go back to the beginning if we are to learn the thoughts of God. Therefore whenever departure comes in, Scripture points back to the beginning. "As for you let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father" (1 John 2:24).

There is no Truth, to be believed by us or it is revealed in God's Word. New truth, not revealed in the New Testament, does not exist. There is no difficulty or departure from the Truth for which we are not in some way protected by the Word. Thus there is never a need to go outside the Word of God, for it supplies *all* our needs!

This explains why God allowed the evil to reveal itself even in the early days of the Assembly. Is it not surprising to see such departure and disorder as found in Galatians and Corinthians even in the beginning? The Apostle Paul had long laboured with the assemblies; they possessed all spiritual gifts, and there was such power of the Holy Spirit that they performed miracles. While there were prophets who prophesied (the highest form of teaching), there were also terrible heresies (Gal. 1:9; 5:4; 1 Cor. 15) and the worst moral evils.

At the same time and in the same place where these spiritual powers were exercised, there was a disorder the like of which we don't ever, or at least very seldom, hear of today (1 Cor. 11). God allowed evil to reveal itself in different forms at such an early date so that we would have divine instructions how to behave ourselves in difficult situations. In the Scriptures we can find all we need as believers. There is always an example, or a principle to be found that gives sufficient guidance for all that we may have to do. Thus we never have to do our own will since we can always know what God's will is.

Well, this is the faith for which we have to contend earnestly. Was there ever as much reason to do so as there is in our time? Were there ever such attacks on God's Word, or its divine origin, as in our days? Today it is almost impossible to find a group of people who still accept the whole Bible as the wholly inspired Word of God. Were there ever before such attacks upon the glory of the Lord as in our days? Now by far the greater part of those who call themselves Christians do no longer confess Him as having "come in flesh" (1 Jn. 4:1-3). In our days God has given much light; nevertheless, was there ever a time during which true believers lived practically so little in agreement with the heavenly, spiritual position of the Assembly? Was there ever a time during which believers with so much light as we possess, walked practically so little by faith, so little separated from the world and the forms of the world?

We have to contend *earnestly*. Generally this would consist more of defending the Truth than attacking error. When we see error and departure entering, we must resist to the utmost and set our face as a flint. This should be done by declaring the Truth so that false teachers may be exposed, but it is never right to awake the devil when we cannot defeat him. It is pointless to be occupied with the evil itself if God has not called us to do so.

*To be cont'd*

## **OUTLINES FOR BIBLE TEACHING (17)**

### **35. THE SACRIFICES - Leviticus 1-7:38**

## *Outline*

1. The Burnt-offering Lev. 1; 6:8-13
2. The Meal-offering Lev. 2; 6:14-23
3. The Peace-offering Lev. 3; 7:11-21
4. The Sin-offering Lev. 4; 6:24-30
5. The Trespass-offering Lev. 5:1-6:7; 7:1-10

## *Explanation*

1. The person bringing a burnt-offering was to lay his hand on the head of the animal (thereby making the animal one with himself); he then had to slaughter it. The priest skinned the animal, cut it into pieces, washed its inwards and legs with water, and burned all of it on the altar. The blood was sprinkled on the altar of burnt-offering and the priest received the skin (Lev. 7:8).

2. The meal-offering or oblation consisted of fine flour, unleavened cakes, or roasted corn (wheat or barley), and oil, frankincense, and salt. Only a portion of it was burnt, the remainder was for the priest.

3. As with the burnt-offering, so with the peace-offering or thank-offering (as it is also referred to) the person bringing it laid his hand on its head (now making himself one with the animal) and slaughtered it. Then the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar and burned the fat. Its meat was eaten with joyful and thankful hearts by the priest and the one who brought the sacrifice (Lev. 7:15-18).

4. All who brought a sin-offering had to lay their hands on its head before they slaughtered it. If a priest, or the whole congregation had sinned the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled seven times before the veil and then put on the horns of the altar of incense. In other cases its blood was not brought into the sanctuary but put on the horns of the altar of burnt-offering. The remainder of the blood was poured out at the bottom of this altar, on which all its fat was burnt. Its meat, however, was either totally burnt outside the camp (always so if its blood had been brought into the sanctuary) or eaten by the priest in a holy place.

5. The trespass-offering was dealt with as a sin-offering; its blood, however, was always sprinkled on the altar of burnt-offering. Only its fat was burnt, for its meat had to be eaten by the priest who made atonement with it.

## *Lesson*

Except for the peace-offering, the offerings together present a beautiful picture of Christ in His devotedness in glorifying God and securing our salvation.

The burnt-offering shows us Christ as the One who offered Himself up by the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:11-14; Ps. 40:6-8; Eph. 5:1-2).

The meal-offering (a bloodless sacrifice) speaks of the Lord's perfect, holy life and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit (pure flour and oil — Lk. 3:21-22; 4:1-15; Phil. 2:6-8).

The peace-offering is not so much a picture of Christ Himself as of the result of the four other sacrifices, of which the first two have particular reference to God and the latter two to man. The believer's heart, having been put at rest and peace, gratefully and devotedly praises the name of God (Col. 3:15-17; Heb. 13:15).

The sin-offering shows us Christ in the judgment, having been made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). He bore the righteous and holy judgment of God over sin, tasting fully its terribleness, how it was only worthy of condemnation. Thus He died for sin within us (for our sinful nature — Rom. 6:6; 8:3). For this reason the sin-offering was more solemn than the trespass-offering (Ps. 22; 1 Pet. 3:18).

The trespass-offering represents Christ's having died for our trespasses (guilt — Isa. 53:5).

## 36. THE FEASTS OF JEHOVAH - Leviticus 23

### *Outline*

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|---------------------|---------------|
| 1. Passover         | Lev. 23:4-5   |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | Lev. 23:6-8   |
| 3. First-fruits     | Lev. 23:9-14  |
| 4. Pentecost        | Lev. 23:15-22 |
| 5. Trumpets         | Lev. 23:23-25 |
| 6. Day of Atonement | Lev. 23:26-32 |
| 7. Tabernacles      | Lev. 23:33-36 |

### *Explanation*

Israel had seven feasts (seven speaking of perfection). The Sabbath held a very special place (v. 3) for it was a token of Jehovah's covenant with Israel.

1. The Passover was the commemoration of the redemption in and out of Egypt on the basis of the blood of the lamb. It was held on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month.

2. The second and third feasts were closely connected to the Passover. The second one was the Feast of Unleavened Bread which began on the fifteenth of the first month and lasted one week. During this feast no leaven was to be found in the house, and an offering by fire was brought to the Lord each day. On the first and on the last day there were convocations and no work was to be done on these days.

3. The third feast was that of the sheaf of First-fruits (the spring harvest). The priest brought this sheaf on the day immediately following the first Sabbath after the Passover (i.e. on the first day of the week).

4. From this last day, fifty days were counted to the fourth feast, Pentecost. During this feast two wave-loaves were brought. Besides these they were to bring seven perfect lambs, a young bullock and two rams, all as a burnt-offering. As a sin-offering they were to bring one buck of the goats and as a peace-offering two he-lambs. There was to be a convocation and no work was to be done on that day.

5. The Feast of Trumpets was held on the first day of the seventh month; after the summer harvest had been completed. Once again there was to be a convocation and no work was to be done that day.

6. The Day of Atonement followed on the tenth day of the seventh month. On this day two goats were taken, and after Aaron had brought a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house, he was to sacrifice the first of these goats, which was called the goat for Jehovah. The blood of these sin-offerings he had to carry into the sanctuary and sprinkle it once on, and seven times before the mercy-seat. After this he had to apply their blood to the horns of the altar of burnt-offering and sprinkle it on this altar. Then he had to confess the sins of the people over the head of the second goat, which was then led into the wilderness and sent away. Two rams were offered as burnt-offerings, one for Aaron and his house, the other for the people. Then the fat of the sin-offerings was burnt on the altar and the remainder was taken outside the camp to be burnt there. This day of Atonement was the only time in a year that the high priest was allowed to enter within the veil. There was to be a convocation, and the people had to afflict their souls and refrain from all work.

7. The Feast of Tabernacles concluded the yearly series. It was held after the fall harvest (the most important one) had been completed. All fruits, corn as well as grapes had been harvested. It was the commemoration of the 40 years desert journey. During this week the people dwelt in booths made of branches and greens and rejoiced greatly (Jn. 7:37-39; Isa. 12). On the first and on the last day there were to be holy convocations and on these days no work was to be done.

### *Lesson*

The Sabbath is primarily a picture of the rest which all believers may possess for their hearts and consciences. Only in heaven, however, will they be able to fully enjoy it in all its richness (Heb. 4:9).

In our time the Lord's Supper is for us the reminder of the Lord's death and our redemption through Him (1 Cor. 5:7; 11:23-26). The blood of Christ alone entitles us to enjoy the rest depicted by the Sabbath. For this reason the Passover was the basis for all the other feasts in Israel.

In the Feast of Unleavened Bread we see that the believer must bring forth fruits of righteousness. Scripture always uses leaven to depict evil, thus at all times (seven days) the Christian must show forth Christ (1 Cor. 5:8; Gal. 5:22).

The sheaf of the First-fruits shows us the resurrection of Christ who was raised on the first day of the week after the Passover (Jn. 20:1; 1 Cor. 15:20).

The wave-loaves portray the reaping of the first-fruits of the bride of Christ on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit had descended (Acts 2; Jas. 1:18). Notice how they were prepared with leaven (sinful flesh is within us), but that through the application of fire in the baking (our having died with Christ — Rom. 6) the activity of the leaven has been terminated.

It is easy to see how the first four of these feasts have had a prophetic bearing of which we have seen the fulfillment. Thus also the remaining feasts have a prophetic character. The interval between the fourth and the fifth feast represents the present time during which the harvest is brought in, it is the Church period.

The Feast of Trumpets speaks of the awakening of the Jewish remnant (Isa. 27:13; Mt. 24:31; Zech. 8:6-8).

The Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16) speaks of the day of Israel's atonement based on the great eternal sacrifice on Golgotha (Heb. 10: 12-14). It speaks of Israel's repentance and restoration on the basis of the work of Christ (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

This last feast speaks prophetically of the Millennium. After all its testing, straying, and wandering (Zech. 14:16 etc.), Israel will finally, by the grace of God, be able to enter into its rest. It is the end of God's ways with Israel and the children of men.

*To be cont'd*

## **JESUS, LOOKING AROUND... (1)**

—A. E. Bouter

### *Introduction*

In Psalm 14:2 we read "Jehovah *looked down* from the heavens upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God." But now God has *come down* in grace rather than in judgment as in Genesis 11:5 and 7 (cf e.g. Heb. 1:1ff, Mk. 1:1 and Phil. 2:7ff). In Mark the Holy Spirit portrays Him as the perfect Servant and Prophet of God. He came to serve God, even when He came to serve men. He came also as the faithful Prophet who made God's thoughts known where God's people had departed from Him, and who brought about *restoration*.

How remarkable that we find five accounts in Mark in which we see the Lord "looking around."<sup>1</sup> As God He was accustomed to look down, but now He was also present as the perfect Man "looking around" to see if He could find anything or anyone in whom God could delight.

Looking down from heaven God hadn't found anyone who met His desires until... "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John at the Jordan." Then the heavens parted, and the Spirit, as a dove, descended upon Him, while a voice came out of the heavens saying: "Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I have found My delight" (Mk. 1:9-11). For the first time in man's history God saw, while looking down from the heavens, indeed a Man in whom He delighted, who had come to do His will and was about to begin His public ministry to the glory of God.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The verb translated by "looking around" is found five times in Mark in connection with the Lord Himself (3:5, 34; 5:32; 10:23 and 11:11) and once in connection with the disciples (9:8). Besides these six times the word (*periblepo*) only occurs once more in Luke 6:10, the parallel passage to Mark 3:5.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, God always delighted in Him (as the Eternal Son of the Father), but also, and specially so, when He became Man (Lk. 2:14). The point here is that God found His delight in a Man like us, sin apart (cf. Mt. 3:17; 12:18; 17:5; Mk. 1:11; Lk. 3:22; Col. 1:19 and 2 Pet. 1:17). Seven times the Holy Spirit speaks of God's delight in this Man. There is an eighth time, but then we are

Mark seems to ask: What will this Man who came on earth to do God's will find on earth? What shall He see while "looking around" here? Will He find something that God can delight in, that agrees with God's will? (cf. e.g. 2 Chr. 16:9; Zech. 4:10). The six accounts in Mark speaking of "looking around" occur in six different settings; the first one *in the synagogue* (Mk. 3:5).

### *In the Synagogue*

In the first part of Mark the Lord performed several miracles, the first and last of which took place in the synagogue. At the last the Lord was absolutely rejected by the religious and political leaders (3:6); then He looked around.

The Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile had restored the altar (worship according to God's thoughts). They had rebuilt the temple (God's dwelling place among His people), and the city with its walls (control and protection of these treasures). All of this had been done under the renewed authority of God's Word (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). But already in the days of the high priests mentioned by Nehemiah, the moral and spiritual condition of the nation had deteriorated so far that Malachi as God's messenger had to admonish them severely. In a certain sense John the Baptist's message, after some 400 years of silence, was but a continuation of Malachi's. The purpose of their message was to prepare a "remnant" that would receive the Lord Jesus - the Messiah, the Son of God - though the leaders and the mass of the people wouldn't (Jn. 1:11).

Upon their return from the exile, the Jews had also built synagogues in several cities and villages as official, public places where God could be served. Now that the Son of God had come — the true Servant who served God perfectly in all aspects — would He be able to find love, understanding, affection for Himself and His service in this place?

In Mark we find the synagogue *characterized* by:

- a. The presence of a man entirely in the power of an unclean spirit (1:23).
- b. The inability to (spiritually) lay hold of the things of God, presented in the man with the dried up hand (3: 1 ff);
- c. Unbelief (6:2-6).

Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus, having come to introduce the Kingdom of God,<sup>3</sup> works in the midst of such circumstances in sovereign grace, by bringing people under the authority and the blessing of God. To do so, He begins with a person's spirit (as we find it also in Paul's Epistles; Rom. 1-8; Col. 1:28) to "restore" it before God, to "admonish," to "present perfect." Next He deals with his hand, giving him the ability — under His guidance, delivered from Judaism — to lay hold of the things God has given (cf. Mk. 2:23), so that he can receive food for growth, and be prepared for service. It is sad to see how poor and powerless, how unsuited to any form of service persons (often children of God) remain who are in a system where, due to its character, there is no room for the true Servant. Formally the things of God may be available to them, but, through all kinds of human arguments and reasonings — which only display unbelief, lack of trust and disobedience (Mk. 6:6) — there is really no room for His authority and freedom.

In this passage (Mk. 3:1-6), we see the Lord Jesus, having been rejected by the leaders of His people, *looking around*. This wondrous Person, Jehovah-Jesus, looked at them! The situation was no better than in Psalm 14! Though they served God, it was only outwardly, their heart was far from Him. He was "distressed at the hardening of their heart." The spiritual and political leaders apparently saw their position endangered for they resisted Him firmly. He did not look at His opponents with hatred, but rather, because they dared to maintain themselves thus in God's presence, with divine wrath which flowed from His love for His people. What perfect love was shown by this attitude. In Mark we often read of the Lord's feelings and compassions. He had come so close to His people; they were so far removed from Him!

Today the Lord, as it were, looks around as well, judging all things (cf. e.g. Rev. 1-3). He looks at the political and religious leaders. He knows their motives, as He knew those of Saul of Tarsus ("Why do you persecute Me?"). He is sad about them, specially in those cases where, under the pretense of service for Him, true food is kept from the people and room is given

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*connected with Him (Lk. 2:14), after a new order! In Mark 1: 11, God publicly announced His delight to the Servant Himself in the presence of John the Baptist and all who had been baptized (Mt. 3:17 and Lk. 3:22f).*

<sup>3</sup> *Mark stresses that He came as Servant and Prophet, Matthew that He came as King to establish with authority heavenly, divine principles and to have subjects (disciples and slaves) with Him. In Luke He displays the grace of God, and in John He reveals and declares the things of the house of the Father. As the Lord's disciples, we have a place and a task connected with each of these "lines" of service, which are further expounded in the Epistles.*



to all kinds of unclean spirits; meanwhile the working of God's Spirit is either hindered or set aside (as far as man's responsibility can do so).

God, however, maintains His honour. The closer we are to God in position and confession, the more serious such things are. Does the Lord Jesus also have to look at us in anger, or can He call us "His brothers." because we do His will as true disciples in God's kingdom?

*To be cont'd*

## THE MINOR PROPHETS (4)

—R. Been Sr.

### The Prophecy of Hosea

#### Introduction

Hosea's prophecy is the first of the twelve Minor Prophets. He directs his message predominantly to the ten tribes of Israel, although he mentions the two tribes several times. In his prophecy *Israel* generally means the kingdom of the ten tribes (1:6-7, 11), *Judah* the kingdom of the two tribes (4:15). This we must not forget, or many passages which are difficult to start with become even harder to understand.

Besides the name "Israel" he also uses the name "Ephraim," *the main tribe of the ten*, to designate the ten-tribe kingdom. Sometimes he uses these two designations in one breath (5:5,9). In a few places, when thinking of the past or the future, he uses the name "Israel" for the entire nation of twelve tribes (3:5; 9:10; 11:1). Besides these he uses the name "Jacob" for the twelve tribes of which Judah is the leader, the ruling tribe. The name "Israel" is used 43 times, "Ephraim" 36 times, and "Judah" 15 times.

With Isaiah, Hosea prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (four kings of Judah) and during the reign of Jeroboam II (king of Israel). During the reigns of the four kings of Judah seven kings ruled in Israel, beginning with Jeroboam II until Hoshea, the last king of the ten tribes before their exile. Totaling the years of these seven kings we come to a total of 82 years and 7 months:

2 Ki. 14:23	Jeroboam II	41 years	
2 Ki. 15: 8	Zechariah		6 months
2 Ki. 15:13	Shallum		1 month
2 Ki. 15:17	Menahem	10 years	
2 Ki. 15:23	Pekahiah	2 years	
2 Ki. 15:27	Pekah	20 years	
2 Ki. 17: 1	Hoshea	9 years	
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		82 years	7 months

Totaling the years of the kings of Judah we come to:

2 Ki. 15: 2	Uzziah	52 years	
2 Ki. 15:33	Jotham	16 years	
2 Ki. 16: 2	Ahaz	16 years	
2 Ki. 18: 2	Hezekiah	29 years	
		<hr/>	
		113 years	
Of which	must be subtracted:	23 years	
		<hr/>	
		90 years	

This subtraction is necessary, for in the sixth year of Hezekiah the exile to Assyria brings an end to the ten-tribe kingdom.

Hosea could therefore have prophesied over a 90 year period. When we look a little closer, however, it will become evident that during the reign of King Jeroboam II he prophesied only a few years, nor did he live during all the years of

King Hosea. Taking these things into account we end up with an estimate of *at least 60 years*, which is long, but possible. He must have begun his prophetic career as a young man, and continued to speak the word of the Lord until he was very old.

At least 60 years he has worked in the midst of a nation characterized by apostasy and idolatry. It causes us to think of Daniel and Jeremiah who also served the Lord faithfully for many years, until a very high age.

Hosea's service was not an easy one. Full of sadness about the increasing amount of corruption, he only could persevere because he looked faithfully up to God who, although He had to set the nation aside, would nevertheless accept it again in the distant future. He announced the judgment over Israel as it was told him by the Lord, in spite of opposition, particularly from those prominent in the nation. How would he have loved to announce blessings rather than to admonish, warn, and chastise again and again. Someone once wrote something like this about Hosea, "As a guardian angel of his nation, he covered his face because his contemporaries failed to awake from their trance which prevented them to be saved from the judgment lying upon them." During these many years he was faithful, persistent, in his work; and right into our days his labour bears fruit through his written prophecy.

Let us never think that the words of the Old Testament prophets had only significance for Israel. The story of Israel's sins, decay, and apostasy is also the story of Christendom.

Hosea's prophecy gives many indications of the conditions prevailing during the prophet's life. These conditions gave rise to his prophecies. By inference he spoke of the violence of Israel's kings and the murder of several of them. He spoke of the error of seeking the protection of Assyria or Egypt, the antagonistic superpowers of those days.

If Hosea lived at all during the early days of King Hoshea's reign, it is clear from his prophecies that he has not experienced the days in which they were taken into exile to Assyria (10:7, 15; 13:11).

In his prophecy, Hosea linked the then-prevailing conditions among the ten-tribe nation to those of the future. The tragic days, shortly before their end as a nation by their exile to Assyria, clearly influenced the prophet's thoughts and style.

His is not a restful discourse but an interrupted and incoherent presentation of thoughts. He loved his people, was knitted to them with his entire soul. He announced the judgment, was indignant about the nation's behaviour, deeply saddened about their flippant and stubborn conduct. Yet, he spoke also of God's grace which, in the distant future, would lead the nation once more to salvation and blessing.

The divisions in the prophecy are simple. Chapters 1-3 describe the moral condition of the nation and point to God's counsels. Each of these chapters concludes with a prediction of restoration in a day to come.

Chapters 4-10 speak of the court case Jehovah has with Israel; they summarize all God's ways with this nation.

Chapters 11-14:1 point to the grace of God toward Israel and Judah.

The fourth division consists only of verses 2-10 of the 14th chapter. It speaks of Israel's ultimate conversion and the restoration of the nation under the reign of the Messiah.

*To be contd*