

THE MINOR PROPHETS (21)

—R. Been Sr.

Hosea 13 Cont'd.

Death and hades are the two most terrible powers on earth. But the Lord Jesus has the keys of both death and hades. These powers are subject to Him. They are as it were defied by Him who has the keys to let go of their prey by His saying: "Where, O death, are thy plagues? where, O Sheol, is thy destruction?" When God arises to save, to deliver, of death and hades (Heb. Sheol), then He will bring about a complete deliverance, not just a half one. He will not regret doing this.

In this verse we see once more an allusion to Christ's work of redemption, just as we did in chapter 6:2. In time Jehovah will deliver the remnants of the two and ten tribes on the basis of the death and resurrection of Christ. *This, however, is a deliverance in connection with the earthly position of restored Israel.*

But later yet, at the end of Christ's Millennium, that which was announced by the prophet Isaiah will take place: "He will swallow up death in victory. And the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of His people will He take away from off all the earth" (Isa. 25:8).

The believers of the Millennium will only receive their immortal and incorruptible bodies at the end of that period to enable them to live eternally on the new earth. In the Millennium death and sin will still be present, although it will be greatly curtailed since the devil will be bound during that time.

The apostle Paul quotes partly both Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14, though both are modified in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55. Isaiah says: that He *will* swallow up death; Paul says: "Death *has* been swallowed up in victory."

At the coming of the Lord Jesus for His Assembly it will become apparent that death has been swallowed up in victory, i.e. has been robbed of all its power. For then the saints which slept will be raised from among the dead and those who are still alive will be changed, and both groups will receive glorified, immortal, incorruptible bodies, suited to live eternally.

vv. 15-16

These two verses speak again of the low-sunken condition of the people. God withdraws Himself from them so that they sink into corruption and become a prey of the Assyrian. They are given up to the results of their sins for many ages. Though the ten tribes might still flourish for a while, enjoying social prosperity, it would be to no avail. For "an east wind" would arise, let loose by Jehovah, that would dry up everything, causing all treasures to lose their value. This illustration has the invasion of the Assyrian in view. By it Samaria, the capital of the country, would be destroyed, while terrible cruelty would accompany it, as described in verse 16.

From other portions of Scripture we know that the Assyrian will be judged by God after he has been used as a rod of discipline. Those exiled of the two tribes (who are not really in view here) raise a song in Babylon before the face of the Lord and call for the Lord's revenge over Babylon (Ps. 137:8-9). A similar recompense will be meted out to the Assyrian.

How full of misery is the way that leads away from God. And then to realize that all these horrors wouldn't have come over the ten tribes if the people had turned away from the folly of sin, and if they had humbly turned to God. God is long-suffering. But when all threats and warnings are cast to the wind, then there remains finally nothing but judgment over everyone and everything.

*Grace triumphs - Chapter 14**vv. 1-2*

This chapter is as a day of golden light after the darkness of a black night. It transfers us to the future when the *remnant* of the ten tribes, though sunken ever so low, will return to God with genuine humbleness and repentance. It is not that the

entire nation of the ten tribes will return to God in a future day, just as little as this will be the case with the entire nation of the two tribes. The great, unbelieving mass of the ten and the two tribes will be given up to the judgment of God. Of the two tribes we know that two-thirds of the people will be destroyed. If Scripture mentions a restoration of Israel, it contemplates *a remnant out of the ten and two tribes which will form this one new Israel*.

This chapter deals with the future remnant of the ten tribes. Through the friendly persuasive words of the prophet, or rather: through the power of the Word of God, applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts and the consciences, this remnant is urged to return to God. It is *not a national return*, that is always more or less superficial, but everyone of the remnant will personally humble him or herself and repent. Everyone belonging to the new Israel will know the Lord, and possess life from God. Through the Word of God, through the words of verse 1 this remnant is encouraged to turn to Jehovah, and in doing so the prophet does not fail to point to the reason for Israel's fall.

The prophet puts, so to say, the words with which the remnant returns to Jehovah in their mouth. They must say to God: "*Forgive all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips*." In a similar way the prophet had urged them on before. Once Jehovah had judged the nation of twelve tribes, He would go to His place, i.e. break the connection with the nation. How long? *Till they acknowledge their trespass*, and would start to seek God's face. When they would be in affliction in a day to come, when they would become afraid, then they would seek Jehovah early (5:15). Then the prophet urged them to return to the Lord (6:1-3). The great mass of the people, both of the ten and of the two tribes, never come so far as to acknowledge that they are guilty before God and to seek His face. But the remnant does so.

Although the prophet puts the words, as it were, in the mouths of the remnant, their repenting is nevertheless genuine and proceeds from a broken and contrite spirit. God therefore accepts them. It will be as in the days of John the Baptist. They who came to him with confession of guilt he accepted, and he appointed them as a remnant to which the Messiah would come. They who did not confess, and that was in that case the great mass, was rejected.

The return of the future remnant to God will be accompanied by an upright recognition of guilt and with true humility. Taught by grace, the remnant will finally possess the *consciousness* of God's forgiving love. They will pray: "Forgive all iniquity." There will also be a trust in God's goodness. They pray: "Receive us graciously," or, "Be gracious."¹ This latter prayer only fits the lips of those who, acknowledging their guilt, justify God's judgment over them, while trusting that they will receive forgiveness and cleansing. The words used by the remnant at their return agree with those we often find in the Psalms. Complete forgiveness is the need of the heart that is convicted of sin and attracted by grace (Ps. 130:3; 51:1-15; 103:3; etc.).

"Be Gracious."

What a trust is displayed in this prayer. And this short prayer becomes even more beautiful when we see in the following verses how it has been answered. A series of the most beautiful types serves to show how God answers the prayer: "Forgive all iniquity," and afterwards that of, "Be gracious." Both are prayers out of a broken and contrite spirit.

Before the remnant has received God's response, yes even without waiting to see if the Lord will be gracious, *it feels the need to thank God*. "So will we render the calves of our lips." How many calves had the people offered up on the idol altars in earlier days! But now they would use another means to give vent to their thankfulness. They now understand that the blood of calves and goats cannot take away sins. But the calves of the lips, the fruit of the lips of those who confess the name of the Lord, the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving for what God has done, is now the only sacrifice that can be offered to Him, for *the peace-offering*, Christ, has once been offered up and has satisfied the righteous demands of God's holiness (Ps. 116:12, 17). It isn't that *if* God is gracious, they will give thanks. *God's giving is here not a prerequisite for their giving of thanks*. The remnant will understand *that God has already forgiven*, for the unspeakable gift of the Son, through whose death and resurrection all their iniquity has been taken away.

v. 4

From this verse it is evident what precious fruit the chastening by God has produced in the remnant. *They take their eyes from all that is human, to expect all from God alone*. That is the purpose of the Lord's chastening. They would no longer expect salvation from Assyria. Nor would they trust in natural abilities to resist evil or to escape it (no longer would they

¹ The margin reads "Give good." And this is the text in the Dutch translation used by the author. Another Dutch translation reads: "Be gracious," This nice transition between the two readings will be used by us.

ride on horses). They would no longer kneel down for the work of their own hands, addressing it as their God. They feel themselves weak, helpless as an orphan. But God would have mercy on such as these.

Looking away from all human assistance and support, the remnant of the nation that stood no longer in any connection with God, that was Lo-ammi, would meet God. To this remnant that was robbed of all things, Jehovah would give all it needed. He will not be their Judge but their Saviour. Mercy instead of judgment would be their part. It is the experience of every sinner who comes with repentance to God, be it in the past, today, or in the future.

vv. 4-7

Here we find a series of ten undeserved blessings:

1. *I will heal their backsliding.* This blessing is the basis of all that follows. He forgives, cleanses, heals. He gives mercy, opening His arms to the repentant.
2. *I will love them freely.* Independent and overflowing love. This love is always found with God, it is part of His Being. Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, however, He had not been able to show this love.
3. *Mine anger is turned away from him* (the new Israel). This blessing is the result of the two previous ones. The wrath has been turned away for eternity (Ps. 103:9).
4. *God will be as the dew to Israel.* A refreshing of which Christ is the source.
5. *Israel shall blossom as the lily.* Symbol of grace and beauty.
6. *Israel will cast forth his roots as Lebanon.* Symbol of the firmness of the rule of Israel's King, Christ.
7. *Israel's shoots shall spread.* The blessing of Israel stretches far and wide.
8. *Israel's beauty shall be like that of the olive-tree.* Grafted again on its own trunk, the new Israel will blossom in fresh and youthful beauty of both kingship and priesthood.
9. *Israel's smell shall be as Lebanon.* The new Israel will be the bride of the King (Song 4:10-11).
10. Literally it says in verse 7: *To them who live his (Israel's) shadow will return; they shall revive as corn, and blossom as the vine; the renown thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.* Israel is here once more compared to a tree, but now in connection with the blessing of the nations, who will seek Israel's "shadow," its protection, and who, because of it, will revive as corn, and blossom like a vine. We have here then the true destination of Israel: offering rest and refreshing to the nations. Then Japheth will dwell in the tents of Shem. And according to the word of the Lord to Abraham, *Israel, the blessed nation, will be a blessing to other nations.* How perfectly beautiful is the restoration of Israel!

v. 8

In this verse we overhear a beautiful conversation between Jehovah and restored Ephraim, which at that time will no longer be the head of the ten tribes, since there will only be *a new Israel of twelve tribes, under one Head, Christ.*

Ephraim will say: "*What have I to do any more with idols?*" Israel has found the Christ, its Redeemer and its King. The idols play no longer a role in their hearts and lives. So it is now also for the soul who has found the Lord Jesus. The things of the world have no longer any value to such a person.

Jehovah says: "*I answer him, and I will observe him.*" Israel will have a relationship with the true God. He will answer all its prayers. He will lighten Israel with the light of His countenance.

Ephraim shouts: "*I am like a green fir-tree.*" Certainty, continuing testimony, holiness, ornament of the sanctuary, all of these are found with the new Israel.

Jehovah concludes: "*From Me is thy fruit found.*" The Lord rejoices when good fruit, worked by Him, is found with His own.

And so we hear in these verses a humble and thankful remnant that has been restored, that, while not forgetting its origin and past, and deeply sorrowing about it, enjoys nevertheless the undeserved blessings. And we hear Jehovah who observes the glorious fruit of His grace; from now on He wants to be their source of life and strength.

And isn't it the same for today's believers? Cannot they sing, "No words are suited to expound what I in Jesus Christ have found."? They are redeemed from the power of the devil, accepted by God and blessed by Him beyond measure. Besides this, they are made to be a blessing to others, not in their own strength, but in that of Him who is the Source of all strength.

The prophet, having come to the end of his book, glances back. Summarizing the inscrutable ways of God, he calls out: "*The ways of Jehovah are right, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall therein.*"

Who is wise, let him understand these things. Who is intelligent, let him know them. *The purpose of the whole prophecy is apparent from this: it is a presentation of the ways of the Lord with sinful and guilty people.*

The grace of God may be ever so great, *His ways are and remain righteous.* The righteous can walk in them by the power of God. But the transgressors will fall in those ways, and be struck down by them. No other prophet presents the ways of God in their entirety as perfectly as does the Prophet Hosea.

The End

A SEED OF GOD (2)

—A. E. Bouter

The Seed and Christ's Suffering and Resurrection.

A look through a concordance will impress us with the immensity of the subject before us. According to the Hebrew concordance of Evan-Shosham, the word *sera* (to sow, seed) occurs in the Old Testament 56 times as a verb and 229 times as a noun. And then we don't even mention the Greek New Testament, where we find a further explanation of the spiritual significance (resp. 52 and 43 times). Obviously, in our study we cannot refer separately to each verse containing these words. We will therefore restrict ourselves to some of the "great lines" when we look at the seed of Abraham, David, and others.

So far we were occupied with God's desire to have a "seed of God" here on earth, and we have seen a little how He realizes His thoughts in us in a practical way. But what is the basis on which He does this? There is a partial answer to this in Isaiah 53. Without Christ's atoning suffering, His death, and resurrection, and — as far as the Assembly is concerned — His glorification, there would not be a "seed of God" in this world.

The moral beauty of Christ we find marvelously presented in Isaiah 53, just as it is elsewhere, in the Psalms, and in various types (the tabernacle and the offerings), and in the antitype (the reality) in the New Testament (see e.g. Jn. 1:14). Isaiah 53 also contains various aspects of His suffering and of His work for God (burnt-, meal-, sin-/trespass-, and drink-offering).

But our present purpose is to see that on the basis of this all there is a seed of God. In first instance this is Christ Himself. But in the second place it is the believers, the fruit of His sufferings, a new generation that is joined to Him in His resurrection (doctrinally Rom. 6:4f and Eph. 2:5f, etc.). These thoughts we find in Acts 8:33, where Isaiah 53:7-8 is quoted from the Septuagint (generation or origin, spiritual descendants, contemporaries). A new generation has now been placed in this morally dry world, where it displays the same characteristics as Christ did during His life. I don't say that this new generation does it in the same perfect manner, but in all the members of the body of Christ collectively we can see a reflection of Him. This way God finds that which answers to "the seed of God." In connection with Isaiah 53 I think that we may say that this also points to the future faithful remnant. These believing Jews will, as the disciples of Christ, display His moral characteristics in a world where the King of the Jews is rejected (Mt. 5:1-12, etc.).

For Christ too it is important to have this "new generation" (as we can see in Acts in the eunuch, Saul, Cornelius) to whom He can join Himself, with whom He can share the results of His work (He will divide the spoil with the strong — Isa. 53:12). What a triumph for Him!

"Another seed" - Genesis 4:25

In Abel we see a (weak) image of Christ as Man here on earth, rejected, and put to death by His own (in Gen. 4 depicted by Cain, Abel's brother). The type speaks also of His suffering and is in a certain way in contrast to Christ (cf. Heb. 12:24). Abel's death led to the introduction of another, Seth, who was appointed by God Himself in Abel's place. "Another seed": I think that we may think here of the Man of a new order, appointed by God in the resurrection. The seed that we see in Abel, but that has been put aside, is, as it were, continued in Seth. Seth speaks therefore of Christ in His resurrection, as the Head of a new generation (Rom. 5:19; 1 Cor. 15:20, 42-49). This new generation is weak in itself, mortal (Enosh), but it is the moral continuation of Abel on earth: they call upon the name of the Lord. In this we see a similar dependence upon and trust in God.

Psalm 22

Psalm 22 speaks of the Lord's suffering as sin-offering and of God's answer in His resurrection (v. 22). In His suffering He is unique and alone. *In His resurrection* He joins Himself immediately with "His brethren," "the congregation," "the seed of Jacob and Israel," "a great congregation," "the seed," and "a people that shall be born."

On the one hand we see here His suffering (especially in the three hours of darkness) and on the other the glorious results of His work. Based on these and on His death and resurrection, that new generation exists, a seed of God which is joined to Him in various ways.

- a. The Assembly (then a mystery, now revealed Eph. 3);
- b. The future faithful remnant;
- c. The future people of Israel;
- d. the future nations of the earth.

All these are seen as the result of His work, because "He has done it." These groups are also seen as a result of God's work, rather than of human responsibility.

It is remarkable that in Psalm 22 some of the moral characteristics are mentioned that elsewhere are connected with the "seed of God," this new generation. "Ye that fear Jehovah" (v.23); "the meek," "those that seek Him" (v.26). Even the title of Psalm 22 contains a reference to this new generation (quite frequently the title of a Psalm, or its first verse contains the result of what is described therein): "Upon the hind of the morning (Aijeleth-Shahar). The hind has a devotion similar to Christ's and speaks of the response to His love, all in connection with the dawn, the new beginning, the new morning of His resurrection.

John 12:14-26

John's Gospel presents the Lord specially as the perfect burnt-offering, but the verses we will look at speak more of a seed and a new generation.

In John we have "the grain of wheat," Christ, the Word incarnate (Jn. 1:1,14), the Son of the Father (2 Jn. :3), who is in the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1:18), but at the same time now also the Son of man, the Man, who is now in heaven. God the Son, who has become Man, though remaining God, to be able to die as Man. We see Him in this Gospel as the absolutely unique One, as the Only-begotten Son of the Father, but also as the Burnt-offering, foreknown before the foundation of the world. God's Spirit gives a tremendous dimension to such a simple expression as "the grain of wheat." Now let us look at three points:

1. Christ could have remained "alone": He could have returned immediately to the Father (13:1). This we can compare with the type in Exodus 21:4.
 2. This wonderful Person died glorifying God and was laid in a tomb (Jn. 19:30-42). What *suffering* did He undergo, and how has His glory been expressed in these sufferings
 3. Just as the seed falls into the earth and dies, to bring forth fruit afterwards, so it was with the Son of man who did not seek Himself, but who gave Himself, with the blessed result of "much fruit."
- a. The grain of wheat bears much fruit: the fruit is inseparably connected with Him, the grain of wheat;
 - b. There is a wealth, a multiplicity, of fruit;
 - c. The Lord establishes here a link with eternal life (12:25), which adds an extra dimension to the whole;
 - d. There is a new generation joined to Him on the basis of His death *and* resurrection.

This new fruit (12:24) has only one desire: to be here on earth to the honour of the Father (12:25f). The tremendous moral characteristics of the Master are seen anew in His disciples, "a seed of God," to the glory of His name.

Two Illustrations

On the third day (Gen. 1:11f), type of the day of resurrection, there is fruit on the earth. We find there:

- a. The freshness of new life (grass), but also:
- b. The seed-bearing plant, and
- c. The tree bearing fruit "after its kind."

It is a three-fold manifestation in ascending order of this new (resurrection) life in its strength, freshness, vitality, and abundance. (This implies the thought of growth and ripening, reaching maturity). And again and again it is "after its kind." That is how it is with the new generation that we encounter in this chapter. It is the reproduction and manifestation, in a tremendous multiplicity and abundance, of what is found in Christ, be it as He was as Man here on earth, or as He is now in the glory. With this last remark I think specially of the Assembly, which is not only His fulness (as it were completing Him as Man), but which also represents Him here on earth. Every member of the "body of Christ" here on earth shows a little of what is found in Him, the Head in glory. And thus the Assembly as a whole will "reflect" Him in the universe, thereby answering to God's counsel. A true "seed of God"!

In 1 John 3:9 we read: "Whoever has been begotten of God does not practise sin, because His seed abides in Him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God" (see also 1 Jn. 5:18). Here again occurs that same thought of a seed of God in those who are born of God, or, as Peter says it (2 Pet. 1:4), who have "become partakers of [the] divine nature." God is light and God is love: His Being and His nature find expression in the children of God (1 Jn. 3:10ff) in practical righteousness and holiness on the one hand and in divine love on the other. And all this is found in a world that is controlled by the devil, full of darkness and hatred. What a challenge to us to respond to this plan of God. But also, what a victory in us for Him who once obtained the victory for us!

The End

OUTLINE FOR BIBLE STUDY (33)

69. ABSALOM'S END. DAVID RETURNS TO JERUSALEM. — 2 Samuel 17-1

Outline

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| 1. Counsels of Ahithophel and Hushai | 2 Sam. 17:1-1 |
| 2. The message of Jonathan and Ahimaaz | 2 Sam. 17:15-2 |
| 3. Absalom Defeated and Killed | 2 Sam. 18:1-1 |
| 4. The Cushite and Ahimaaz | 2 Sam. 18:19-3 |
| 5. David's Grief | 2 Sam. 18:33-19:1 |
| 6. David Returns to Jerusalem | 2 Sam. 19:9-4 |

Explanation

1. Ahithophel's goal was, "and I will smite the king only" (17:2), but God was mightier than Ahithophel. He appointed that Hushai's counsel was followed.
2. Jonathan and Ahimaaz carry the message to David.
3. David gained time to set his army in array, thereby the victory was gained.
4. The Cushite and Ahimaaz both run to bring the message of the victory to David.
5. David mourned exceedingly about Absalom, because he realized that Absalom died in his sins.
6. David's return to Jerusalem is accompanied by great display of grace. Amasa, Absalom's captain, and Shimei are forgiven.

Lesson

Judgment caught up with Absalom (Prov. 20:20; 30:17). Absalom is an example how God punishes evil. Even adult children should honour their parents (Eph. 6:1-3).

It seems that Absalom was lost for eternity. The deepest grief for believing parents in mourning is, to fear the departed child was not saved.

In the battle we see God's victory (Rom. 16:20).

As so often, these events speak prophetically of the end-times, David's flight is a picture of the future flight of the remnant (Mt. 24:16), and his return of the Messiah's entry among His people who once rejected Him.

70. DAVID NUMBERS THE PEOPLE. THE PESTILENCE. — 2 Samuel 24

Outline

1. The Numbering of the People 2 Sam. 24:1-10
2. The Pestilence 2 Sam. 24:11-17
3. The Threshing Floor of Araunah 2 Sam. 24:18-25

Explanation

1. David ordered that the army be numbered, thereby he brought God's judgment over himself and all the people.

2. David was allowed to choose his own punishment; he chose to be disciplined by God's own hand. God sent a three-day pestilence which caused 70,000 men to die.

3. The prophet Gad instructed David to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah. Although Araunah was willing to donate whatever was needed for the sacrifice, David insisted on buying it.

Lesson

According to Exodus 30:12-13, every man that is numbered must give a ransom for his soul to Jehovah. Joab warned of the consequences (2 Sam. 24:3; 1 Chr. 21:3) but David's heart revealed pride and haughtiness (Prov. 16:18). The anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel.

David humbled himself and confessed his sin and then pleaded for the people (2 Sam. 24:17; 1 Chr. 21:17).

On the threshing floor of Araunah (or Ornan) mercy prevailed (Is. 54:8). The threshing floor of Araunah was on Mount Moriah where Abraham offered up his son, Isaac. Here David built an altar and brought offerings and on this mountain the house of God was built in Solomon's days (2 Chr. 3: 1).

To be cont'd

THOUGHTS ON 1 THESSALONIANS 1

—M J. Arentsen

May the Lord grant us that our hearts are governed by the three great principles of: Faith, Hope, and Love. The Thessalonians, in the freshness of their young faith, let these principles rule their work, labour, and endurance. But what are faith, hope, and love, if not the faith that is directed towards God, the hope on the Lord Jesus, and the love that results from living in the consciousness of His love. We love, because He first loved us. Therefore it says in verse 3 that the believers worked, laboured, and endured before God. It is God in the perfection of His nature, the God who is light and love, but it is also the Father. In this relationship with Him, the Thessalonians had been planted as an assembly (v. 1). This is not said of any other assembly. They had been plucked out of a dead idolatry that only ruled their lusts, and now they

had turned to God (v. 9); they had completely turned about. They did not try to christianize their idols, but had now another, a true Object that could satisfy their hearts, a living and true God: Living in contrast to the dead idols which could never exercise the conscience; True, in contrast to all the untruthfulness of the polytheistic heathendom that could only debase their senses.

So great had been the change in their lives that in every place people spoke about their faith in the living God. And now they could, as long as they were left on earth, enjoy the privilege of giving their lives in the service of God. He had given them new life; they were now allowed to serve Him as bondmen, to honour Him, to praise Him, and to enjoy His glory.

But how can a creature know anything of the love, the counsels, and the glory of the true God? For God is infinite in His glory, in all His characteristics, isn't He? The new object they had received for their hearts drew their hearts upwards, to heaven. But He is too high and too exalted to be known and to be enjoyed without One who is Man and who is at the same time able to tell us the divine things. The wondrous thing is that the Son of God has come and has become truly Man. No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared [Him].

Reverently spoken God also needed an Object to make all His love and all His counsels known. But the Object of the heart of God could not be lower than Himself. Therefore God the Son became Man and displayed all that is in the heart of God. Even before the foundation of the world it had been in God's heart that a Man might unfold to man all His plans and thoughts. The Man by whom God did so had to be God also.

Who today can understand the thoughts of God? Only the converted man who believes and who is sealed with the Holy Spirit can, in the Lord Jesus, enter into the love of God. To this end the Son of man came and solved the problem of sin. To this end He went into death. And thereby God is completely satisfied, so that the Saviour has been raised from among the dead by Him. Now He is in heaven. We await His return from there. There is our place too. There lies our joy, happiness, and glory, for He is there. In the Lord Jesus we know God. He says, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father.

However, because man is a responsible creature that has failed in his responsibility (just think of Adam), there must be judgment: the coming wrath. The believers, however, will be taken up before the wrath of God and of the Lamb has come. We are delivered from the coming wrath. We are brought into heaven to be there forever with the Lord in a body conformed to His body of glory. Then nothing can any longer draw us away from the Object of our heart, from the Son of God who became Man to enable us to enjoy His glory, but who above all displays in His person all the glory of God that He possessed from all eternity, but which He now also possesses as the glorified Man. Don't our hearts long for Him?

GILGAL (2)

—*J. van Dijk*

The first thing done in Israel after they crossed the Jordan was their circumcision. From this we may learn some valuable lessons. It seems as if God had relaxed His standards during the wilderness journey; no one born after the departure from Egypt was circumcised. We may not know why God had not insisted on this ritual during the journey, but perhaps an explanation may be found in the spiritual significance. Israel in the wilderness depicts those who know to be safe behind the blood of the Lamb, but who as yet have not understood that not only did Christ die for them, but that they also died with Christ. This latter truth is depicted in the crossing of the Jordan, the river of death. God wants us to know His will and be obedient to Him, yet He does not want anyone to live above his or her spiritual level, though we are always responsible not to live at a level lower than that to which God has brought us; God's grace is not indifference.

Once we have learned from the Word of God that we have died with Christ (we have been circumcised with the circumcision of the Christ, His death), we come to the next step, and not before, for earlier we have no source of strength to do so. That is, we must put off in a practical way our members that are on the earth. This should be the direct result of our having died with Christ. But in practice we find this hard and difficult. It is one thing to know and another to live out what we have learned. God knows this. And so we have in Joshua these two types closely connected; the river and the circumcision.

Now we often say: "We must put the knife to ourselves!" But should we?, or can we? *Joshua* circumcised the people. One really cannot do it himself, the first bit of pain would cause us to draw back. All we can do is to come out of our tents and present ourselves to our Joshua. Then He will circumcise us. And how does He do this?

One of His sharpest knives is, I believe, the difficulties so often found among God's people. Our Joshua makes use of this (as of other things) to circumcise us practically. Nothing reveals more where the flesh is still active within us than real or imagined injustice done to us by our brethren. But the Lord has control of the circumstances and uses them to remove our flesh. But how few of us endure this? How few, like Job, endure the impossible until at last they abhor *themselves* in sackcloth and ashes? Has this ever been the result of difficulties for you? Or did you rather complain about others who should have been different? If so, you have still need to be circumcised, you have, as yet, not fully submitted yourself to your Joshua. The flesh is still active within!

"All things work together for good to those who love God." Indeed, for God uses things we don't like — particularly those things we don't like — to circumcise us, removing all that is of the flesh still found within us. So remember: This difficulty, meant to remove, will only expose, unless...! Oh, Lord..., have Thy way.

The End

THE GLORY OF THE FATHER AND THE SON (2)

—H. Rossier

John 12

In chapters 11 and 12 of the Gospel of John, we see how God testifies of His Son in connection with His future glory, before He — rejected by the world — would be lifted up upon the cross.

The first testimony we see in the resurrection of Lazarus. In this wonderful event Martha and the others with her would see the glory of God (Jn. 11:40). The divine character of Him who raised the dead was thereby revealed in the person of Jesus here on earth. He was declared the Son of God by the resurrection of Lazarus, before He proved this *in power* by His own resurrection (Rom. 1:4). This therefore is the testimony that was given of Him as the *Son of God*.

In John 12:12-16 we find the second testimony. The Messiah of the Jews, Jehovah, of whom it was said that His name would be excellent in all the earth (Ps. 8:1), was on the way to the cross. But first God saw to it that from the mouths of the disciples and "the babes and sucklings" (Ps. 8:2; Mt. 21:16), a testimony of Christ's future *royal* glory was left among the people who had rejected and mocked Him. There is little doubt that those who expressed this praise did not appreciate its significance. But it was God who arranged these things even in the smallest details, so that before all He Himself maintained the glory of His King whom He desired to anoint over Zion (Ps. 2:6). Of this glory the prophet spoke when he said, "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to thee, He is just, having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

The disciples, who at first didn't understand these things, thought of this *when Jesus was glorified*, after He had gone into the glory of heaven (v. 16). The Holy Spirit reminded them of it and then they understood that the Lord's Anointed would not be glorified in heaven only, as had been prophesied: "Who hast set Thy majesty above the heavens" (Ps. 8:2), but that later He would also be glorified here on earth on the basis of His resurrection, praised by His people in the place where He was once rejected and crucified. The entry into Jerusalem was therefore a testimony of God regarding His Anointed, the Messiah, the *King of Israel*.

John 12:20-24 gives us the third testimony. Some Greeks from among the nations, who acknowledged the God of Israel, came to "worship in the feast." They made their wish known to the disciples to see Jesus. The Lord answered and said, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (v. 23).

Words similar to: "The hour² is come," occur often in this Gospel (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1). In this Gospel they mean always the hour of the cross (cf. Mk. 14:41), but *of the cross in connection with its glorious results* which are never separated from the Lord's sufferings.

In the portion we are occupied with the Lord announces then that the *Son of man* will be glorified on the basis of the cross. He announces a particular result of His death as something that will take place later. God testifies of this result beforehand by the visit of these Greeks. In the *resurrection* He was not only to be glorified as Son of God and as Messiah but also as Son of man, when He will be acknowledged by the nations. *In a future day* that will take place through the

² "The hour" or "this hour" (Mk. 14:35; Jn. 12:27) simply means the cross. "Your hour" is the cross seen as the work of man, the world and Satan (Lk. 22:53).

conversion of the nations that will be brought to Christ by the remnant of Israel to be introduced into the kingdom of the Son of man, when God has put all things under His feet (Ps. 8:6). But *today* this takes place through the gospel that is preached among the nations (1 Tim. 3:16), since the death and resurrection of the Son of man. The grain of wheat that fell in the earth and died has brought much fruit in the resurrection (v.24).

What a joy must have filled the heart of the Saviour at the thought that God, His God, would give Him in this way here below the glorious fruit of His suffering as Man! His glorification in this portion consists therefore of this that the nations that have been brought to share in the blessings of His death, are introduced into the sphere of blessings that thus far had belonged solely to the people of Israel.

In contrast to the triumphant words of verse 23 we read in verse 27, "Now is My soul troubled." After the Lord Jesus had announced the result of the cross, He is again confronted with it. This is evident from the word "now." Can we not understand that the soul of the Saviour was troubled at the thought that *this hour* would mean the interruption of His fellowship with the Father and His being forsaken of God?³

In this connection I have often noticed how the word says of the Lord: "He was troubled" (11:33), or as here: "My soul is troubled," or also: "He was troubled in spirit" (13:21). Yet His heart, the seat of His feelings, was never troubled in the way the disciples' hearts were (14:1). Nothing could, even for a moment, reduce the love that filled His heart. That love led Him with determination to the cross without His uttering one single protest, without opening His mouth. But His soul was troubled even to the deepest part of His being. Could He, who from eternity had known the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father, desire to lose that enjoyment?

Think of it, how must Christ's terrible anguish of soul for this separation which lasted only three hours of the eternal existence of the Son of God speak to our consciences! Are we very concerned about a loss of communion? How many hours, days, months, yes even years often, may go by without the enjoyment of this communion, whereas the Lord, at the thought of this short interruption, called out, "Now is My soul troubled"! And let us be well aware that it was *not* the outward sufferings on the cross, the crown of thorns, the scourgings, the violence, the nails, the fact that He was exposed to the sight of heartless people without compassion, the fact that they gave Him vinegar to quench His thirst — bitterly as He felt all of these — that troubled His holy soul.

He therefore expresses it in His anguish: "What shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour." Shall He now ask the Father to show His love for Him, His well-beloved Son, by saving Him from this being forsaken and to deliver Him from the cross? Wonderful love of the Lord! He who knew the full love of the Father and who valued it as only a divine heart is capable of doing, was not going to ask to be saved from this hour. No, He didn't do it, for therefore He had come to this hour. He only asks: "Father, glorify Thy name"!

To the Father to glorify His name meant nothing less than to display His love for us by not sparing His Son this suffering of the cross, by not saving Him from it, and by delivering Him up for us. What treasures of love are contained in these words: "Father, glorify Thy name." How united did the hearts of Father and the Son beat in the same sacrifice, in the same devotion, in the same infinite love! And for whom? For us, who were without strength, sinners, ungodly ones, enemies of God, enemies of Christ!

Could the Father be silent at this complete self-denial of His Beloved who desired that the Father reveal His love to us rather than for Himself? There came therefore a voice from heaven: "I both have glorified and will glorify [it] again" (v. 28). He had glorified His name as Father by entrusting the resurrection to His Son. Of this Lazarus was a weak picture, because he was resurrected *for the earth*. But His name would be glorified again by the resurrection of His Son *for heaven*, of Him who is marked out Son of God in power by His own resurrection, Him who has been raised from among the dead *by the glory of the Father* (Rom. 1:4; 6:4).

But above all, this glory caused the grain of wheat that fell into the ground to bear *much fruit* in the resurrection. The Father is not only glorified in the resurrection of Christ. His love wanted to give us the same place as His beloved Son, the One who procured our salvation. Already this resurrection of the Son has obtained for us the resurrection of our souls; we have been *quickened with Christ and raised with the Christ* (Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 3:1). In the near future it will result in the resurrection of our bodies, the "first resurrection."

³ *Both these things are true. But the first is prominent in the Gospel of John, which reveals the Father, and the second in Matthew and Mark. But to avoid all misunderstanding it is good to accentuate that the sacrifice of Christ in its entirety ascended before God as a sweet-smelling savour and that the Father was never more glorified than by the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. It is therefore never said that the Father forsook His Son.*

Thus the Father has been completely glorified by His giving His Son in love for us, and by His raising Him and us with Him.

To be cont'd