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A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH

and a warning against the deception in the last days
foretold by Christ

"Take heed that ye be not deceived"

TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN

PRESERVE ME, O GOD

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A BIBLE CLASS -
HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE AND UNREPROVEABLE

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A WITNESS AS SIGNIFIED BY THE LILIES

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TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN

From reading the Psalms, we are aware of the phrase, “To the chief Musician” used by David in many of his writings. These words translate as, “to the One who overcomes or the Victor”. David used this title in one-third of his psalms, showing what great spiritual importance they held.

These words as given in the Concordance gives the thought of being “permanently eminent or as something that glitters” - as a bright object seen in the distance which one travels towards. We know David looked forward in faith to the One promised - who would be “permanently eminent” - his Son promised by God as the Victor. He is the One who makes possible the hope of salvation - the One that shines in the darkness that men may have the hope of life. This is why he uses that phrase so often - looking in faith and hope for his Son that would come as the light of the world. John’s words in Revelation record the Lord Jesus’ own words:

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”
Revelation 22:16

This is what David foresaw as God had promised - his offspring who would one day accomplish God’s purpose. He is like the sun in glory as it rises each day to dispel the darkness, creating a world filled with light - this was in figure the Lord Jesus’ work.

To the church at Thyatira, the Lord Jesus’ message gave hope of this light:

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
And I will give him the morning star.”

Revelation 2:26-28

The Lord Jesus was that morning star - the true light of God - the One who was His Word, making possible the means of salvation for those who lived it with obedience and faith.

To increase their faith, the Lord Jesus took His disciples Peter, James and John up into the mount, and there they witnessed a vision of His

transformation. He appeared as He will be in the Kingdom age, - walking and talking with Moses and Elias. This was confirmation to those disciples present, of Christ's glory to be bestowed, even though this vision was given before His death and resurrection. Peter later went on to write of this miraculous event, teaching those who hear of Christ's role as the light of the world:

“For he (Jesus) received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts;”

II Peter 1:17-19

David often found himself in darkness, surrounded by enemies and likewise by his own fleshly failures and knew he had but one source of help to turn to:

“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.”

Psalm 36:1-4

He found himself many times in fear of those who would do him harm - those who had no reverence for God or His ways and who sought his life. He had only God to help and deliver him:

How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

Psalm 36:7-8

In this psalm, David explains what he had come to value - God's mercy and judgment given for the help of His children - those who put their trust in

Him and His Word, who believed that He could lead them from the flesh's darkness into the light of hope and salvation.

The 9th verse goes on to say:

“For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”
Psalm 36:9.

The only means of life is through His Word - and those that embrace His ways will be illuminated with understanding and knowledge of His plan for this earth and how they can attain unto it through belief in His Son - the Victor, the One who overcomes.

When tempted in the wilderness, the Lord Jesus overcame His own inner temptation by recalling God's word - “it is written”. Thus, was He given strength to overcome His own internal nature which sought to lure him from God's path of righteousness.

A good servant knows what his master needs even before he asks. The Lord Jesus was the perfect servant because He obeyed His Father in all things, focusing His entire living on His service:

“Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD,
that delighteth greatly in his commandments.
His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright
shall be blessed.
Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness
endureth for ever.
Unto the unright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious,
and full of compassion, and righteous.” Psalm 112:1-4

We are allowed to see David's spirit in these psalms and when we read those entitled “to the chief musician”, we can see further into David's heart and faith that his Greater Son would be sent as promised, as a light to shine out of the world's darkness.

John was given a vision of the future Kingdom of God, particularly the holy city of Jerusalem:

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

And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it, and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abominations, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.” Revelation 21:23-27

Here is the light of God's word promised to man - when those that overcome through His mercy, are granted life eternal in the Kingdom of God. To attain unto that hope, we must today struggle to reflect that light in our living - to give Him glory through obedience to His Word and belief in His Son, the Lord Jesus - our only source of light and life.

M.C.S.

“PRESERVE ME, O GOD”

Psalm 16:1

In the sixteenth Psalm, we see an example of words that demonstrate why David was a man after God's own heart. The title of this Psalm is “Michtam of David” - with the word “Michtam” meaning a golden faith. It was with golden faith, or a precious faith, that David followed God, and with that same faith requested that God preserve him:

“Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.” Psalm 16:1

The word “preserve” means to hedge about, to protect, or to watch over. David asked for God's protection as he acknowledged it was because of his faith, that preservation could be provided. David recognized the need of being preserved, and we see throughout his life that he was protected from many physical threats, such as killing Goliath and escaping Saul. There is no doubt that David was under God's protection. Even when he failed, it was his faith that brought him to immediately ask for forgiveness, and it was his willingness to repent that preserved his life.

David, in another Psalm, asks for the deliverance that only God can deliver, because God hears those who put their trust in Him:

“O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.”

Psalm 25:20-21

David’s faith shines through as he acknowledges the need for preservation. He does not want to be ashamed of his own ways, for he knows the ways of the flesh will always try to overtake the teaching of God in a man. David also recognizes that in order to be preserved, one must be humble in seeking God’s deliverance:

“Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

Be merciful unto me, O LORD: for I cry unto thee daily.

Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

Psalm 86:1-5

The wisdom of David’s son, Solomon, is demonstrated by his understanding that wisdom comes from God, and by the application of that wisdom, a man can show himself worthy of God’s deliverance:

“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;

If thou seekest for her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.

He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul;

Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.”

Proverbs 2:3-11

Again, in the sixteenth Psalm, David gives God the credit for preserving him both spiritually and physically:

“The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.”
Psalm 16:5

God is the provider of our hope, and He supplies His faithful with the things that they need to be sustained. By His grace He has provided us with all that is around us, and by His counsel we have the knowledge that we need to continue in that hope:

“I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.”
Psalm 16:7

David’s words tell us that his “reins” instruct him; but what does “reins” mean? According to the Concordance, “reins” means kidneys, and gives us the impression of an important or vital organ. David’s reliance on God was so strong that even in his dark times he could be guided by the ways of God, as if they were a vital organ that is needed to sustain life. The preservation granted by God is firm in David’s mind because he keeps God as his foundation. David also concludes that God has provided the path of life to His faithful, and will preserve them eternally if they follow that path:

“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”
Psalm 16:8-11

The “Holy One” that David spoke of is evidence of his golden faith, for it refers to the Lord Jesus, who we in this time, know to be God’s Son, sent unto the earth as the means of our preservation. David’s faith was such that Peter recalls those words as he spoke of Jesus on the day of Pentecost:

“Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.
For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be

moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope.

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.

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

Acts 2:24-31

It is up to us to have faith in God and His promises, and to demonstrate our faith in His ability to save and preserve us from the world, and from our fleshly tendencies. We need a golden faith in God, like David's, to trust in Him to preserve us, rather than trusting in ourselves. We cannot be saved by our own methods, but can only be delivered from death by the Lord Jesus whom God sent as the means of our preservation.

E.J.M.

“IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY”

Not long ago we began reading the epistle of Paul to Timothy through which he endeavored to help and encourage his younger brother in the work of witnessing to God’s word, not only to those established as brethren and sisters, but also to those who through this ministry might have been helped to receive the call to the Truth, Paul writing to Timothy said:

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.”
I Timothy 4:14-15.

Timothy had apparently been given a special gift—the ability to teach others of God. How careful Paul was, encouraging him to use this talent to the best of his ability - meditating upon it - giving himself wholly to it, so that all who heard might profit in a spiritual way. He goes on in verse 16 of this same chapter to say:

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

This exhortation to Timothy conveyed the understanding that actions speak louder than words. Actions combined with doctrine, could save not only Timothy, but any whose ears might be opened by the Father to the gospel. We think of Paul’s words and the responsibility of witnessing and are helped to gain in appreciation for the spirit in which this must be done.

In chapter 2 of I Timothy, Paul explains what must be done to go about this work, verses 1 and 2:

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

These words help us to grasp the bigger picture of witnessing. Why would Paul exhort Timothy to make prayer for kings and those of the world in authority? There are examples in the Scriptures of those in the Truth who endeavored to assist kings or rulers. In doing so, they witnessed effectively to the purpose of God. Daniel and his three friends for example come to mind as

brethren who showed forth the power of God working within them to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was so impressed that he made a decree as recorded in Daniel 3:28-29:

“Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut into pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

By their confidence in God, these three brethren influenced the king to respect the name of Yahweh, Israel’s God. Not that Nebuchadnezzar served Him, but he created a situation where God’s people in captivity were able to live more peaceably in a strange land than they had previously been allowed.

We think of this event and of our own circumstances today in witnessing and realize how easy it is to overlook this aspect and not fully appreciate the impact of God’s word upon those in authority.

One day, we know God’s word will be in all the earth and that all will come to know the gospel and be responsible to it. It is not known when that will be, but by moving in His ways, we can show that a few are looking toward that hope in faith. As Timothy was about to begin that work, this overview kept in mind would help him and any hearers to know that:

“... there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
I Timothy 23.

Here is the essence of the gospel message of which Paul sought to further impress on Timothy, that he might better project the redasonableness of God to those who would hear him i.e. that through Jesus who paid the price, there is the hope of eternal life in due time. When is that due time? Only when God’s purpose is finally accomplished and all have been called who, in His knowledge, can hear.

It is not known what our actions may ultimately accomplish, but we must be mindful of the sublimity of His purpose and seek that peaceable life now as possible, in hope of the full measure when His purpose is complete:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

Isaiah 55:1-2.

Here was instruction to God’s people teaching them of what was available without cost. The seeing of God can be entered into only through prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus, our mediator, remembering what the 8th verse of this 55th chapter tells us:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Verses 8-9.

The need is to open our minds and allow our thinking to see God’s greater plan, to seek Him and find the higher spiritual thoughts which are of Him to guide us in His work that it may prosper. If we steadfastly do this, verses 12 and 13 promise:

“For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

This peace which we must rise to know in a measure now, is that of mind and spirit that comes as there is a faithful stand made for God’s Truth. We think of the brethren of old who witnessed so pleasingly to the Almighty - Joseph to the thousands in Egypt, also Daniel and his three brethren in Babylon, and it makes us realize how important is Paul’s exhortation to keep the bigger picture in mind.

In Jeremiah 29:7 we are helped in another way to value how this work of witnessing can be accomplished to afford peace:

“...seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”

This is God’s word through the prophet to those captive in Babylon - words to help them recognize that though in bondage, they were to pray for peace, that they might serve as a lightstand among their Gentile captors. How powerful a witness, and indeed we must endeavor to do the same in our own way, though small, that we may be helped to attain a truly, “quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty”.

M.C.S.

“A BIBLE CLASS”

“HOLY AND UNBLAMEABLE AND UNREPROVEABLE”

Colossians 1:22

We read from Paul’s epistle addressed to those brethren at Colosse, saluting them as:

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Colossians 1:2

To these brethren dwelling at Colosse, he commended them for their faith and actions in the sight of God, as he reminded them of what God had done for them as Gentiles now being grafied into the household of God, once reserved only for Israel:

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:
In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”
Colossians 1:13-14

The essence of the gospel message was the news of the Kingdom of God through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ - an inheritance held out to those who embraced God’s word made possible through the sacrifice of His Son. Just as in the garden, the covering of skins were the only means of covering Adam & Eve’s sins (not the covering of fig leaves that they had devised):

“And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”
Genesis 3:7

Their means of covering their sin was not sufficient, therefore, God made for them covering of skins to teach that only through the shedding of blood could sin be forgiven.

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”
Genesis 3:21

A life was taken - blood shed in order to make them a covering of animal skins. This was the only means of continuance with God, and as Paul reminds those Gentiles at Colosse:

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his

flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight
Colossians 2:21-22

No longer aliens to the hope of the gospel given only to Israel, they as Gentiles were now joined in a covenant relationship with God through the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus came in the flesh and through the voluntary offering of His blood shed, became the Mediator between God and His people - the way to bridge the gap between the Spirit of God and mankind.

To be made holy cannot be done by one's own guidelines. This lesson was taught through Adam and Eve's example, who tried to bring about their covering and atonement through fig leaves - yet this was not acceptable in God's sight. They had to be shown that only through God's solution could sin be covered and atonement made with Him.

Paul could speak from experience of the need for atonement, for as a Jew he was alienated from God because he persecuted the followers of Christ - not understanding that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah and Savior promised from the beginning. Yet now after he had been enlightened, could he say:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;”

Colossians 1:24-25

While on the road to Damascus to take into custody followers of Christ, Paul was struck by a blinding light and Christ's voice illuminated the error of his ways. As a Jew, Paul did not understand the Messiah Israel had looked for had come and become the means of atonement for those that believed on Him. He had to be shown that without faith and continuance in a true understanding of God's purpose, there could be no hope of life for Jew or Gentile. Once enlightened, he became a stalwart minister for Christ, preaching of his life, death and resurrection:

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.”
Colossians 1:29

The prophet Isaiah spoke hundreds of years before the Lord Jesus' birth, of the Savior's work in bringing a people to the Father, reconciled through His sacrifice, as His bride:

“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the LORD GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”
Isaiah 61:10-11

This is the figure of the Lord Jesus and those joined to Him as the bridegroom and His bride, adorned with the garments of salvation and righteousness - linen pure and white.

In that day, those accepted at the judgment seat of Christ will be clothed in white linen as signifying the righteousness of saints, and being changed from flesh to spirit creatures and will only then be, “holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight”.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:”
I Peter 3:18

Because of His perfect life of obedience to God’s word, the Lord Jesus was resurrected from his body of flesh to a quickening into a Spirit being as a forerunner for those that follow Him in faith and belief. To do walk after Him takes diligence to apply that same faith every day during our time of probation.

Yet without the shedding of His blood, no matter our diligence in faith, the hope we seek after would not be possible. His blood alone has the power to transform us from sinning, fleshly creatures of this life, to the hope of being joined with Him in Spirit as, “holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”

M.C.S.

UNTO WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE

In our portions in Luke chapter 13 verses 18, 19 and 21 the Lord Jesus asked this question:

“... Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”

The Lord Jesus used the example of a tiny mustard seed and a lump of leaven, both of which grow to many times their original size, to speak to us of what the Kingdom of God should mean in our living. It should grow to become an enormous presence, overshadowing all of our thoughts and plans, with all of our energies focused on the hope of entering into it. Jesus tells us in this same chapter, verse 24, of yet another characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven:

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Why are there only a few saved and the rest not? The Kingdom of God is exclusive - held out for only those who strive to conform their living to what God requires. We find that when we are tested, we are given an opportunity to reveal to God what is in our heart and mind. When we are in the midst of trial and testing we are tempted. Temptation is a lure to go against God's word. We may know what God requires, but the readiness to follow it will determine if we are to be accepted into that Kingdom of rest that God will establish. How important it is to realize that it is not God who tempts us but our own fleshly natures. In James 1:13-15 we read:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

The Word was given through the grace of God to apply His teachings in our living. The Lord Jesus is a perfect example of One who used the Word with power as He was tempted in the wilderness. He was sorely tried, as we

are, yet was able to overcome in each circumstance through the Word of God. In Luke 4:2 we learn of His testing after baptism in the Jordan:

“... Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing; and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.”

This was a severe trial, one that is almost impossible for us today to imagine - going without nourishment for forty days. At the end of those forty days He would be sorely tempted to turn stones to bread. The Lord Jesus knew that within Him was the power to do so, and besides who would see Him—He was alone. He did not allow the craving of His flesh to interfere and thereby use that power for mundane matters, but remembered the words in Deuteronomy 8:3:

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did they fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”

Just as the Lord Jesus, we too can be helped in our hour of temptation, but only as the Word is applied, and the flesh controlled.

Jesus' second temptation was no easier as we read in Luke 4:5-6:

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.”

Again, Jesus knew that the power was within Him to take the kingdoms of the world now, instead of waiting for God's purpose to be accomplished. He used the Word yet again to say to His flesh in verse 8:

“... Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

He knew the kingdoms of earth would one day be His, not when He chose, but rather as God knew the time was right for His will to be

chose, but rather as God knew the time was right for His will to be accomplished. Perhaps the words recorded in Deuteronomy 6:13 came to the Lord Jesus' mind:

“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.”

How pleased God would be with His Son as He saw the yielding of Jesus' fleshly impulses to the will of His Father. The Lord Jesus knew that only by the name of the God of Heaven could present help come, and ultimately His own honoured position in God's Kingdom. The Almighty is the only means of true strength and support in times of trial and testing. Jesus knew that one could not give license to the desires of the flesh and expect God's help in times of difficulty.

The final temptation was perhaps the hardest for the Lord Jesus as we read of it in Luke 4:9-10:

“And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:”

Here we find the words “it is written” used, but this time by the flesh to subtly tempt in a very rational manner. Jesus no doubt knew these words from the Psalms:

“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”
Psalms 91:11-12.

How easy it is to justify doing what our fleshly nature would like by twisting God's words to suit our own purposes. Yet the Lord Jesus was able to control this type of reasoning, allowing the Spirit to subdue His flesh.

We too must depend upon the Word and use it wisely to overcome temptation, using His Truth to straighten our living into that narrow way which, although too constraining for the flesh, leads to the Kingdom of God. If the Word fills our living, leaving no room for the thinking of the flesh, it can be like that tiny mustard seed or the lump of leaven, growing until it fills the whole of our existence.

“A WITNESS AS SIGNIFIED BY THE LILIES”

How often the titles of the psalms help us to better understand and appreciate the pruned words recorded in their text. Such is the case of Psalm 80 entitled, “To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, A Psalm of Asaph.” Here the title reminds us of the necessity of overcoming for it is directed to the victor, or the one who overcomes, which is the translation of, “To the chief Musician.” The next part of the title, “upon Shoshannim-Eduth,” translates as, “to become a witness as signified by the lilies.” The final portion, “A Psalm of Asaph” conveys the thought of the Gatherer and implies the importance of contemplating the longed for time when Christ Jesus will gather unto Himself those who throughout their time of probation have above all desired and labored to be united with the Bridegroom.

With these thoughts in mind we may ask, was David trying to convey the importance of one valuing his place in the sight of God as well as recognizing the means to attain unto that end as verse 3 reveals?

“Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

David realised he needed God’s help because of the inherent weakness of his flesh, and when he did fail, he looked to God for forgiveness knowing He was the only means of salvation. However, in order to seek this help, David knew he must turn his living around and thus openly witness that he was frail and must seek the help of his Father. This thought is evident through the aspect of the title, “becoming a witness as signified by the lily”. What great help this can be to us as we too struggle to be true witnesses of the gospel in our living.

When we think of a lily we normally think of the delicate greenhouse variety, white in color that appear for sale at Easter. Yet, at the time of David, the lilies that grew wild In the region of Israel were scarlet. The Bible Dictionary describes them as growing rapidly and luxuriantly in the regions of Lake Gennesaret, the valleys of Palestine, among thorny shrubs and in pastures and deserts. Solomon confirms the color of the lilies to be reddish in hue as he says in Song of Solomon 5:13:

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

The Lord Jesus also used the lilies as an example of Solomon’s rich

apparel which would be scarlet and purple denoting royalty, in Matthew 6:28-29:

“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

The radiant color and beauty of the lilies, growing abundantly over the countryside without help from man, would speak eloquently of the majesty and power of God’s hand.

We remember the plans for the temple of God given as a work to Solomon, David’s son. Each aspect of this building was carefully described by God - there was no room for individual artistic interpretation, for each intricate detail told the story of the hope extended of an eternal dwelling place with God, for those who had faith to perceive at. We read of the work of Hiram of Tyre who was assigned the task of making the two brass pillars for the porch of the temple. The detailed design of these pillars and their chapters is described in I Kings 7:18-19:

“And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.”

And verses 21-22

“And he setup the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.”

The two pillars which would immediately catch the eye as one looked at the temple were engraved at the top with the likeness of the lily. These two supports were given names, the one called Jachin which translates as, “shall establish” and the other Boaz or, “in it is strength”. These two great brass pillars holding up His house would speak to the faithful of Israel that God’s promise of an eternal dwelling for His people would be established in strength. The lilies adorning the tops of the pillars would speak of the witnessing required by any who would seek to enter into that house.

Hosea likewise in contemplation of God's promise to Israel described how God would look upon them if they would turn again to Him:

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."
(Hosea 14:5)

How does the lily grow? Arrayed in vivid scarlet color, abundantly covering the hills and valleys of Israel, growing without cultivation or care, more beautiful than anything man can do.

Only the humble shall see the hope of life offered by Yahweh as verses 32 and 36 of Psalm 69 explains:

"The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God."

"The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein."

David reveals how one can make his life become the dwelling place of God if there is a witness to God through one's living as signified by the lilies which were set upon high in the pillars of God's temple. As there is meekness of spirit displayed and a yielding to His hand, there can be a lifting up by God through the perfect Witness who revealed to us that ability to overcome. David speaks of that Witness, the Lord Jesus Christ, as he says in this 80th Psalm verses 17-19:

"Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.

So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

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