

TO BE CHRISTIAN, EVERY DAY (6)

—K. Rouw

Deuteronomy 22:1-12*An unequal yoke*

10. "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together."

First of all we learn here how the Bible explains the Bible: God instructs us how to read His Word. Nobody will deny that the Apostle Paul thinks of this verse when he writes about the unequal yoke in 2 Corinthians 6. This is most significant and ought to instill in us a great reverence for the Holy Scriptures, the book we may have in our hands. The Apostle teaches us here how we must explain the other verses found in Deuteronomy 22, and how we should read the entire Bible. Speaking about plowing with ox and ass God thinks of the temple of the living God and of idols; speaking of an ox that is muzzled while threshing, He thinks of the persons who do heavy work for Him. The stumbling ass, the house under construction, the bird's nest: it has all His interest, even the four corners of the cloak worn by His own. But meanwhile His thoughts are much higher, as far as the heavens are above the earth. It is His desire that we too bring the sphere of heaven to bear on all we do, viewing all in its relationship to Him.

If we desire to walk that way, our hand in God's hand, how important is it then to whom we give our other hand. If we give it to a believer then both we and the other one are linked to the Lord. But to give the one hand to the Lord and the other to worldly friends is to join the Lord to the world.

Perhaps the Apostle Paul had seen it in daily life: a plow with an ox and an ass before it, for no doubt also this commandment will have been disobeyed. The yoke cannot have been very comfortable to either of these animals, and it must have been quite demanding on the owner to plow straight furrows with two animals of such diverse natures. We too can become quite a burden to our Owner, and the yoke chafes our own shoulders to boot.

The Hebrew word for "ox" (*shor*) would have been better translated by "bullock" or "cow." In several places it is so translated (Lev. 4:10; 9:4, 18-19; 22:27-28; Num. 18:17 and Dt. 15:19) and the instruction in Leviticus 22:24 clearly indicates that an ox was not to be sacrificed. This animal of the herd, which was acceptable as sacrifice, was clearly a clean animal. It was, however, not necessarily perfect or faultless just because it was clean. At times a young animal required considerable training before its master could use it. That is what the ox-goad was good for. Ephraim is called "a trained heifer, that loveth to tread out [the corn]" (Hos. 10:11). But Ephraim had to admit "I was chastised as a bullock not trained." Repentfully it added: "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned." After this repentance follow in the next chapter the blessings of the new covenant. Then will the oxen again till the land and eat salted provender (Isa. 30:24).

But the ass will, according to the same verse, share equally in this; although not under one yoke, it will nevertheless be useful for the same task. Even the King shall come to Jerusalem seated upon an ass (Zech. 9:9). Just think of the stiff neck of the ass. Often it puts its legs forward and will not budge another inch. Isn't it just like us humans? The first-born from an ass was therefore not to be presented to the Lord as those of the clean animals. The young ass's neck had to be broken (do you feel the lesson for you and for me?), or it had to be redeemed with a lamb (Ex. 13:13), just as the first-born son had to be redeemed with a lamb. Time and again we find man standing beside the ass in the presence of the lamb, just as we were standing "with the ass" in Genesis 22 when the Father and the Son went up the mountain to bring the sacrifice. It is clear, an ass is an unclean animal which was not to be eaten; it did not chew the cud, and was not to be sacrificed. In Leviticus it is not even mentioned once.

For this reason the ass was not allowed under one yoke with the bullock; no clean and unclean animal to prepare God's field for the seed. Each one by itself was allowed. God can use unbelievers in His service; an unbeliever can print Bibles and tracts, although a believer will do such work with a different heart. Frequently, the chairs to be used during a gospel outreach have been put in place by unbelievers. But for a believer and an unbeliever sharing a task in the Lord's service — that is impossible!, whether it be in the Lord's field, or in any work for the Lord. "The field is the world" (Mt. 13:38), and "Whatever ye may do in word or in deed, [do] all things in [the] name of [the] Lord Jesus..." (Col. 3:17). The Lord Himself has put us in the harness and we can never put our neck under a joint-yoke with an unbeliever.

But someone might respond, "Perhaps... but doesn't this go a little too far? Do we really live on such a high level?" Sad to say, we don't always. That is why one day we are not as happy as the next. But the Lord does not lower His standard; He loves to draw us up higher. Let us therefore not make excuses for a wrong starting point. The Lord ever wants to begin anew with us.

How often do we separate the Monday morning from the Sunday? "Business is business," says the world, and even if we do not say this ourselves, we nevertheless often follow the same practice. How often do we work together with the world? And how often do we feel quite at ease while doing so? "I have to attend these meetings for our business, and I love them for the friendship," said a believer. Isn't there something amiss here? Not that these things are very simple: the necessity of belonging to a professional organization or trade union presses ever increasingly upon us. Each must decide these matters in clear consultation with the Lord.

Many things which were once expected to come about after the rapture, the Church may yet have to live through. Take, for instance, the valley of bones in Ezekiel 37. No doubt, we must observe that the bones are still dry; there is not the least bit of spiritual life in the State of Israel. Their national revival is all in unbelief and not of the Spirit of the Lord. But the brothers in the 19th century certainly did not expect that we, who belong to the Church, would see in the State of Israel that valley filled with dry bones, before the Lord's return. Not that there is anything wrong with this. The Lord in His wisdom did purposely keep that hidden from them so that they, just as we today, would expect His coming every day. Similarly, we don't know whether or not we will have to experience a time in which we cannot buy and sell without becoming compromised. True, the image and the beast with its mark are things of the hour of temptation which is coming over the entire earth. But things are coming pretty close in today's computer-society with its numbers for banking and social insurance. It could be that we soon, if not already while we talk about it, will participate in these things to a greater extent than we are aware of. One would almost get scared.

Don't be scared, says the Apostle, Don't participate. Don't go under the same yoke with them, but enjoy the consolation and certainty: "I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to Me for sons and daughters, saith [the] Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18). Of course, all true believers are children of God, and called to be sons. But the point at stake here is to experience this in a practical way and to live in the enjoyment of it. The verse speaks of having the awareness of being a son or a daughter of this God.

Now the choice is ours: to be strong through uniting with unbelievers, to be able to make a fist, as it is often said; or: be willing to stand alone, but in the assurance that He, who, already in the time of the patriarchs, called Himself the Almighty, and the Jehovah of the people of Israel, He is my Father. And He has far greater ability to help me than all men banded together. Then we will really feel strong, then we will really experience the power of faith.

Not that we would only become members of an association to enable us to stand strong: we might do so for entirely different reasons. Sometimes merely for the reasons of friendship, for our hobby, for sport, tennis, chess, or similar things. I believe a very serious verse is applicable here. "Know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" (Jas. 4:4). Actually, a word precedes this verse, but I did not dare to begin with it, yet I don't dare to leave it out either: "Adulteresses..."

The unequal yoke in 2 Corinthians 6 is often applied to the marriage relationship. The Apostle, when writing this, however, is not thinking of that. There are so many ways in which believers can put on an unequal yoke. One of these is marriage with an unbeliever, and perhaps that is the worst, the most chafing yoke there is. Here, in verses 14-16, we can read what God thinks of every connection of one who is cleansed by the blood of the Lord Jesus with someone who is still an enemy of God. Of course this applies in the first place to marriage, which is the most intimate tie between two persons. But verse 17 shows that the Apostle is not thinking of marriage, for the verse is simply not applicable to that. God wants us to break every other wrong tie, and obviously as soon as possible. Only in the case of marriage God desires that separation is never sought by the believing partner, for it reads, "Let not wife be separated from husband; and let not husband leave wife" (1 Cor. 7:10-11). These verses concern relationships began when both husband and wife were unbelievers, of which one of the two has later been converted. It is quite evident that this can lead to severe tensions, leading to the desire with either party to run away from it all. "Don't do it," says the Apostle to the believing partner, "for who knows . . ." Through a difficult but faithful walk, combined with much prayer, God can do wonders and bring the unbelieving partner to repentance.

But the case may be different. What if the unbeliever wants a divorce, because he or she does no longer want to go out alone to the worldly entertainments, and therefore runs away. What would be the case then? Oh, then the Apostle says something quite strange: "Let them go away; a brother or a sister is not bound in such [cases]." How is that possible? How can that marriage tie suddenly be so loose?

You know, a serious lesson for young believers is hidden here! Just imagine: It is night in the world, pitch-dark night, and every unbeliever is what we once were: darkness (Eph. 4). In this world, a believer may be a little light, a candle. What a joy for the Lord when a believing young man and young woman find each other and stand as two candles beside each other to have, together with Him, one bond. But now suppose that such a "candle in the night" gives its hand to a boy or a girl that is darkness? Reverently spoken, God does not even see it. It simply is not a marriage "in the Lord." Careful now! This does not mean that it is not a marriage as far as the earth is concerned, to the contrary, whether or not it has been established via the proper channels or has simply been consummated in a bedroom, it remains a marriage before God. But it is an entirely different thing from a marriage of two believers; for that matter, it is even different from a marriage of two unbelievers. But of each marriage God says: "I hate putting away" (Mal. 2:16). Only in the case of an unbeliever who departs from a believer — that is, from one converted after marriage — only then God says: "Let them go away." It shows how loose, how little recognized this tie has become to God. But be careful! Let us stress this point: This only concerns a marriage that began when both partners were unbelievers and which, through very special circumstances, became an unequal yoke. The point is this: How serious a thing is it to willfully enter into a bond so displeasing to God! Often it is begun to win him or her. But it is a setting out on a path of disobedience, without the Lord, while praying for the greatest possible blessing.

There is still another yoke. The Lord says, "Take My yoke upon you" (Mt. 11:29). Here also, we may think of a yoke for two. He on the one side, while we may put our neck under the other side. We may do so, but it is not a must.

Don't we often stop at verse 28? "Come to Me... and I will give you rest," at forgiveness of sins and eternal life? And then we become Christians that make nobody jealous, because, to speak the truth, we ourselves are not truly happy either. Therefore it is not at all difficult to keep quiet. Meanwhile we are surprised that we have so little spiritual power, that we so often don't know the way, that we have so little more rest in difficult circumstances than those who surround us.

The Lord says, "My yoke is easy." Although... here we could initially be disappointed, for we must learn to bear it; the Lord adds this to it. The awareness of this may keep some from putting their necks under His yoke. Yet, once they try it, it will be all that they expected it to be, and even better than that. He promises rest to the soul, meekness and lowliness of heart. Isn't that just what we all need?

To be cont'd

VERILY, VERILY (11)

—J van Dijk

John 21:18

"Verily, verily, I say to thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst where thou desiredst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and bring thee where thou dost not desire."

We have now come to the last of these important words of the Lord. By no means is it the least significant of them. It is a most remarkable word which, when put besides the one in John 13:38, becomes very significant. When we consider these words of the Lord, we should not limit their application to Peter, to whom they were primarily addressed. We should rather see them as expressing what the Lord is able to do with one whom He once, not long ago, had to warn for his imminent fall.

The Lord speaks of a change in Peter's life. His young days were characterized by his girding himself. In these lands it was a necessity to put on the girdle before going out. The girdle held up the garment, enabling the wearer to take a longer stride, and it prevented the garment from contact with the dust of the road. Consequently the girding speaks of the preparation to walk. This is what gives it its spiritual significance. In his young days Peter, like so many other young men, wanted to gird himself. He knew, at least so he believed, how to prepare himself for the path before him.

When we have just recently come to the Lord Jesus and have seen His love and His work, how He has gone into death for us, there is a response in our hearts prompted by genuine love for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us (Gal. 2:20). We have seen ourselves as sinners in need of a Saviour. But few are then already aware how very desperate our need is. We experience the natural reaction of loving much, because we have been forgiven much (Lk. 7:47). But with most of us our awareness of the need for the Saviour does not cover such areas as our own incapability to love the Saviour as we ought. Like Peter, we quite naturally think that our new love for the Lord will enable us to endure all things for Him. And

perhaps, if a great demand were made upon our love in these first fresh days, we would indeed be able to endure much for Him. But we have not yet learned the character of the things the Lord want us to endure, as yet we have not learned that our own love is a fleeting one, whereas His love is steady, deep and firm.

Soon the days come in which the Lord asks us to endure for His name sake. And it is surprising what the Lord asks us to endure for His name sake. Frequently He asks us to forbear a brother or sister who is not quite what we expect a brother or a sister to be. I am not speaking of outright evil; no, rather of weaknesses which can become so hard to bear, so hard to put up with; the things to which the seventy times seven times forgiveness are to be applied. Through such things the Lord often tests our love for Him.

Another test lies in the area of Christian fellowship. True love for our Lord, a true desire to be girded by Him is expressed in Paul's question: "What shall I do Lord?" (Acts 22:10). Many gospel preachers advise new converts to go to the church of their own choice. Few stop to think that this is peculiar, for from the moment of our repentance we should seek the Lord's will in all things. Didn't we recognize the exercise of our own will to be sin? Did we not come to our Saviour submitting our will to His? Then we should certainly seek His mind in the matter of Christian fellowship. The Lord should guide us where to go, He should gird and direct us. His Word is an adequate guide in these matters also.

These are but two examples. If they have surprised you, it only proves how often we are little aware of the degree to which we should be girded by our Lord so that we may walk the path He chooses. Let us now return to our case. As we grow in our Christian life, we learn to know more about our own hearts and consequently we become more and more aware that we cannot prepare ourselves for the path the Lord wants us to take. He is the One to train and prepare us if there is to be any good to be found in our walk before Him. Finally we may come so far that we give ourselves entirely over to Him. When circumstances or people around us would tend to give us problems, we will see in them but the opportunities to glorify God. If we reach this point we will resemble our Lord and in doing so, glorify Him in our actions. Remember how the Lord in Gethsemane did not for a moment hesitate to give Himself up to those who came to take Him. He did so, because He saw in their actions but another opportunity to glorify God, and this time to the highest degree, for if God had to settle the sin question He would have to do so with a crucified Christ. So man's evil became God's opportunity to deal with man's sin. This is the ultimate example given by the Lord Himself. How miserably do we fail to see God's opportunities in our circumstances and how little do we recognize that God's loving Father heart has brought them about so that we might not only be trained by them but also find in them occasions to glorify God in our lives. I am afraid that most of us must admit to have failed many a time to do just that. God is still training us!

But then, look at the end result! It is nothing but a miracle from God. At the end of his life that weak, failing Peter stretched out his hands. No longer eager to gird himself, he allowed another to gird him. No more objections, no more: "Lord, this shall in no wise be" (Mt. 16:22). Instead he did put forward his hands so that bands could be put around his wrists. Don't you think that, since Peter in his last days resembled so greatly the Lord Jesus, God has not rewarded him accordingly? Isn't it God's very purpose with our lives, that we might to some degree remind God of the Lord Jesus? (Rom. 8:29). Stephen knew this, and it cost him his life (Acts 7:54-60). Now it was Peter's turn, and he glorified God in his death. That was the man who once said he was willing to die for the Lord, but who then discovered that he plainly lacked the love for His Lord to do so. And now? He did so anyway. He had learned that he had to submit his entire life to God. Nothing could be done with his own energy, it would lead always contrary to God's thoughts. Nothing short of complete submission would produce the desired result. But it meant death for Peter.

That is where the problem comes in for us. We learn from God's Word that we have died with Christ. It is the first thing we give expression to when becoming Christians, for that is what baptism speaks of. But I am afraid it is the last thing we learn. All the problems in our Christian life are but the reflection of the fact that we have not really understood that we have died with Christ. How many Christians speak of the free will of the Christian? And they are quite right, a Christian has a free will. But as soon as he uses it independently from God, as soon as he says: I will, rather than: What wilt Thou have me do?, he no longer acts as a Christian should. He acts as he did before he came to Christ. How much of our Christian lives is a strange mixture of that which shows our old sinful self, with that which is indeed worked by the Spirit of God. How patient a God we have that He does not set us aside, or refuses to use us until we submit entirely to Him. How small will be the fruit for the Lord when we will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And yet, that which has been produced will all be to the praise of our Lord and Saviour.

Have you ever considered that for God to produce fruit for Himself through vessels like you and me is nothing but a miracle requiring His resurrection power? (Phil. 3:10). Only the new life in us, which we received through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, can produce fruit for God. All that is produced by what we were in ourselves does not fall under the classification of fruit for God. So useless is the old nature. But then, so wonderful is God's provision, He gave us new life in Christ and this new life produces fruit for eternity. But all honour, glory and praise go to God, who has done a wonderful, miraculous work in the lives of those who from themselves were but rejectable sinners.

So does this last word of the Lord speak of God's wonder produced in those who believe on His name. "He shall see of [the fruit of] the travail of His soul, [and] shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). And all those who belong to the generation of the redeemed will readily admit: "That He has done it" (Ps. 22:31). Praise and glory be to His name for ever and ever!

The End

THOUGHTS ON KINGDOMS (2)

—J. van Dijk

Our last issue contained some scripture verses under this heading; it is our intention to look at these verses to see what they convey to us. They all relate to Christ's being King, a subject of much discussion among believers. Not that there are true believers who doubt Christ's being King, Scripture is too plain on this point. The confusion comes in when one inquires about the character of Christ's kingdom now and at a later time. We trust that the Lord will allow us to learn from Scripture under the guidance of the Spirit, so that we all may reach a better understanding of the glories of Christ.

STUMBLING STONES

Although there is little help in controversy, it may be needful to have a look at what some believe regarding this subject. For there are some ideas, which, if accepted, would prevent further sincere investigation into the teachings of Scripture. Some ask whether there was ever a time in which Christ was less than absolutely Sovereign. Whether today there are limitations on Christ's ability to cause all things to work together for good (Rom. 8:28) or to work all things after His own will (Eph. 1:11). They enquire: Who is now on the throne and in control of the universe if Christ has not yet received His kingdom?; and to what degree could Christ be more in control in a future day than He is today?¹

These questions are asked, not because an answer is sought, but because the inquirer believes that there cannot be a future thousand year reign of Christ if the answers to these questions are: "No"; "No" ; "Christ Himself"; and "in no degree." Believers looking into the matter of the Kingdom, are likely to encounter questions like these, and there is little doubt that some will be influenced by their seemingly logical inference and thereby kept from properly searching the Scriptures for its instruction.

We will first try to show that these seemingly obvious conclusions can be quite misleading and therefore they cannot be our guide. There is, we trust, among those who believe in Christ as their Saviour, no one who doubts that God has been in control of the universe from the beginning. He is, and always was, the "King" of the universe. No one doubts that the Lord Jesus knew this very well, and yet the Lord taught His disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come" (Mt. 6:10). If we are not mistaken, many who believe that Christ is King now in every possible sense pray this very prayer regularly. Why, if God's kingdom is present, should we pray for it to come? This question demonstrates that mere questions and their "obvious" answers are poor substitutes for the study of the Scriptures. We must search the Word of God together to see whether it warrants us to expect a future thousand year reign of Christ.

But there is another thought that might hinder further study of God's Word on this subject. It is expressed in words like these: "How can God, Christ, or the believers for that matter, find satisfaction in a thousand years of peace, plenty, and prosperity for righteous and wicked alike?"² Once again a question with a seemingly obvious answer which could keep some from proper inquiry after the teachings of God's Word. To demonstrate that our readers should not be hindered by it, let us ask another question. Would God be indifferent to today's quality of government? Would corruption and unrighteousness in today's society not touch His heart? Or would any degree of perfection and social righteousness in today's society be pleasing to God? If we believe the latter (and which Christian doesn't?), we must acknowledge that the kind of conditions expected by those looking for a future thousand year of peaceful reign by Christ personally will be infinitely more to God's and Christ's glory than the best that could ever be attained today. Then, every morning those who sin openly will be put to death (Ps. 101 :8), so that there will be no open rebellion against Christ's authority. As a result there will be no public sin on earth, only sin hidden in the hearts of those who do not wholeheartedly subject themselves to Christ. Would that not be an improvement over the best possible of today's miserable conditions? Would that not give greater delight to the heart of God than the present condition of the world? But all this removing of possible stumbling-

¹ Such questions were raised in *The Researcher*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pg. 10. *The Bible Lover's Fellowship*, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.

² Comments of this nature are found in: *The Gospel Millennium and Obedience to Scripture*, Robert L. Whitelaw, Reprint from *Baptist Reformation Review*, Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

stones does not prove that there will be a future kingdom in which Christ reigns on earth, and that is what we like to ascertain from Scripture.

CHANGES IN CHARACTER

Let us begin with considering the apparent difficulty we just raised regarding the so-called Lord's Prayer. That same prayer contains the words: "Let Thy will be done as in heaven so upon the earth." Despite the truth that God is Sovereign we are all well aware that God's will (although it has always been accomplished through God's providence) is not done on earth the way it is done in heaven; in God's kingdom this will be different. The Lord taught the disciples to pray for a coming kingdom, because that kingdom would bring a glorious change in the character of God's government on earth. To ask: "Thy kingdom come," is not requesting that God may finally assume a place of authority, but that conditions on earth may be so modified that God's authority may be shown to have its sway in a practical way on this earth. There is (or was — now we don't want to dwell on it when it is) a time during which Satan is marked as the prince and even the god of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4), there is no doubt as to this. Is God not Sovereign during that period? To doubt this is serious! Of course, God is Sovereign at all times. And yet another one is at one time or another marked as prince and god of this world. There will also be another time when Satan will not be prince and god of this world. Then the arrangement in the universe will obviously be different, the character of God's government will change. Whether the one or the other arrangement is present at a given time: God is over all, Sovereign. And so to establish that God is now sovereign does not answer the question whether His kingdom is present or not. Under His sovereignty God is able to cause all things to work together for good at all times, and to work all things after the counsel of His will. God can do these things whether or not His kingdom has come. If this were not true, God would not have been Sovereign at the time the Lord taught this prayer to His disciples, which is a thought no true believer would entertain for a moment. For the same reason one cannot maintain that: Either Christ is King now or He is not Sovereign now. There is no conflict in expecting a coming kingdom of Christ and acknowledging Christ's present sovereignty. This observation is important for it establishes the fact that a change in the character of His kingdom is distinct from the existence of the kingdom as such. That God has given Christ the right to reign on this earth is acknowledged by every one who loves Him as his or her Saviour (Mt. 28:18; Acts 3:36). Whilst this knowledge should greatly affect our personal lives, we cannot help but observe with sadness that another still holds control of this world (although, as ever, under God's and Christ's sovereignty).

With the above we have therefore established from Scripture that there is a definite change in character to be expected in the government of God. This opens the possibility that also in Christ's reign there may be one or more changes of character. Whether this is so needs further Scripture evidence.

AN ETERNAL KINGDOM WITH A BEGINNING AND AN END

Let us now look at our verses. Of whom does the verse in Daniel 2:44 speak? Who is the stone cut off without hands in verse 34? Is there anyone who does not recognize the stone to be Christ? And isn't the resulting mountain His kingdom? I think we are agreed on this. But then we should notice that there is here mention of an actual beginning of His kingdom. Yet we read in Psalm 45: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." This verse, in which we recognize the Lord Jesus (Heb. 1:8), touches on the very question we have before us. We cannot pretend to get the answer in this verse, but if we have an apparent difficulty, Scripture is sufficient to clear it up. It is clear that the mountain dealt a deathblow to the previous kingdoms, they were entirely replaced by the new kingdom that was introduced. Notice that the Word does not say that the kingdoms will simply be removed, pulverized and done away; no, a new kingdom appears as a mountain that fills the earth. This could not be if heaven and earth had been removed before that time. Nor can we say that this new kingdom will co-exist with the previous kingdoms. Such explanations would not do justice to what is presented. Let us not forget that the One who presents these things to us is God Himself, and He is perfect in His descriptions. One last observation on this verse, the God of the heavens set up this last kingdom, it is His kingdom, and we notice that God refers to a period in which He will deal with the earth in a different way He has done till then. As a kingdom set up by Him, it is His in a peculiar way. Summarizing now, this verse has left us with three problems: first, it seems that Christ's kingdom has a beginning; second, it seems to be on earth, after it has destroyed the previous kingdoms; and third, it is said to be everlasting, which it hardly could be if it were on earth prior to heaven and earth passing away. We will look further into these things as we go along, but we need other scriptures to help us.

Now let us go to our second scripture (Dan. 7:13-14). Here we would like to ask: Who is the One like the Son of man, and who is the Ancient of days? Is it difficult to see the Lord Jesus as the Son of man, and God as the sovereign Possessor of the universe? But the Lord Jesus' introduction as Son of man indicates that He receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom in connection with His Manhood. And note: dominion, *and* a kingdom. Dominion is connected with power and authority, the kingdom is a special manner of exercising dominion. Perhaps we are already on our way to resolve some of the problems.

Here again we see God active. In the first verse it was God who set up the kingdom that remained, here it is God who gives the kingdom. Who can give something but he who owns it? Some who pretend to own, or some who have temporary custody of something may seek to give that thing away; Satan sought to do so once (Mt. 4:9). But only those who possess authority can give authority, and there is no authority except from God (Rom. 13:1). Here then we see authority which was in the hand of God transferred to the Son of man. In eternity past, Christ was with God and He was God (Jn. 1:1). So we notice that although the Lord Jesus receives the kingdom as Son of man, in another relationship (as being one of the Persons in the triune Godhead) He always was in authority. This also shows that when God begins His kingdom, He hands the control of it to the Son of man, it becomes thereby the kingdom of the Son of man. This helps us to see that, although at times the kingdom is referred to as being God's and at other times as Christ's, yet these kingdoms are one and the same.

To be cont'd

OUTLINES FOR BIBLE TEACHING (11)

21. JACOB'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT; HIS DEATH — Genesis 45:25-50:26

Outline

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Jacob's joy | Gen. 45:25-28 |
| 2. The departure for Egypt | Gen. 46:1-7, 28-34 |
| 3. Jacob before Pharaoh | Gen. 47:1-12 |
| 4. Joseph's rule | Gen. 47:13-26 |
| 5. Jacob blesses Joseph's sons | Gen. 47:27-48:22 |
| 6. Jacob blesses his own sons | Gen. 49:1-28 |
| 7. Jacob's death and burial | Gen. 49:29-50:13 |
| 8. Joseph's words of peace, his death | Gen. 50:14-26 |

Explanation

1. Jacob's great joy at hearing that Joseph was still alive (Ps. 42:11) caused him to give thanks at Beersheba. He waited for God's instruction to depart to Egypt (Ps. 37:5).
2. Jacob's departure was a turning point in the history of the people of Israel; it ended the family history and began that of the nation.
3. Jacob was humble before Pharaoh; he honestly acknowledged his condition before him. But no matter how lowly he might have felt before God, he blessed the gentile king.
4. With God-given skill Joseph reigned over the Egyptians during their time of need.
5. Jacob, in blessing gave pre-eminence to Joseph's younger son, following God's pattern.
6. The right of the first-born was conveyed to Judah and Joseph (1 Chr. 5:1-2). Judah received the dignity, he would prevail and would be the head of the tribes (Judg. 1:2). The name "Jew" is derived from his name. Out of his tribe the Lord Jesus, the Messiah was born (Gen. 49:10; Rev. 5:5). Joseph on the other hand received a double part of the inheritance, which was the portion of the first-born (Ephraim and Manasseh).
7. Jacob's end contrasted gloriously with his previous life, like a beautiful sunset after a stormy day (Ps. 119:67).
8. Joseph fully expected the exodus to the promised land (Gen. 50:24-25 and Heb. 11:22). Joseph's words are most beautiful: "Ye indeed meant evil against me: God meant it for good."

Lesson

The joy of old Jacob (Israel) foreshadows the joy of Israel when the Lord Jesus will be acknowledged and crowned as Messiah (Isa. 12). Even the weakest believer may know to possess more than the most important unbeliever, so Jacob could bless Pharaoh (Heb. 7:7). Jacob in blessing Joseph's sons expressed that God in His grace loves those who are lowly and humble. Until Abraham, the Saviour was expected to come from "the seed of the woman," from then on out of Abraham's family, and from the time of Jacob's blessing out of Judah; an ever narrowing circle. "Shiloh" means "rest" and "peace" (King of peace). In Christ we see the fulfillment of this prophecy. Joseph is a type of Christ as the One who is separated from sinners (49:26). Joseph's words show how God can turn the wrong done by man into good. Christ became the "Saviour of the World" by being rejected and put to death (Rom. 11:12, 33-36).

22. JOB — Job 1, 2, 42

Outline

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| 1. | Job's background | Job 1:1 -5 |
| 2. | God, Satan and Job | Job 1:6-12 |
| 3. | Calamity strikes | Job 1:13-19 |
| 4. | Job's answer | Job 1:20-22 |
| 5. | Once more: God, Satan and Job | Job 2:1-8 |
| 6. | The greatest temptation | Job 2:9-10 |
| 7. | Job and his friends | Job 2:11-37:24 |
| 8. | God's speaking, Job's smallness | Job 38:1-40:5 |
| 9. | God's speaking, Job's repentance | Job 40:6-42:6 |
| 10. | Job's sacrifice for his friends | Job 42:7-9 |
| 11. | Job's blessed end | Job 42:10-17 |

Explanation

1. From Ezekiel 14:14, 20 it is evident that Job really lived, for he is named together with Noah and Daniel. It is difficult to establish the actual period. Some believe he lived in Abraham's days, because like him, he was a great and wealthy shepherd. Others think he lived during the desert journey of Israel. He did not belong to Israel, but was from among the gentiles. As a good father, he spoke to God on behalf of his children.

2 & 5. A look into heaven allows us to see the accuser of the brethren active before God (Rev. 12:10). Three times God testified of Job's piety (1:1, 8; 2:3).

3. Not only Job's possessions, but also his children were taken from him.

4. Job's answer demonstrated how he acknowledged God as the gracious, but also the sovereign Giver of all his possessions.

6. Job's terrible sickness was more than his wife could endure, thereby she became a helper of the enemy and an additional temptation for Job. Despite all, Job remained faithful to God.

7. In his first discourse Job failed to present the truth (Job 3:3, see Mt. 26:24). For believers it always remains true, no matter how great the testing may be, the end will be glorious, for the "short affliction will work for us in surpassing measure an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). Elifaz thought to explain God's ways by his experiences, testing Job's suffering by what he had seen (Job 4:7-9; 5:27). Bildad pointed to the fathers (Job 8:8) saying, "How can one born of women be clean?" (Job 25:4). Zophar presented God as the prosecutor. Where could Job go? (Job 11:10-11; 20:26-29). Elihu spoke of truth and grace (32:21; 33:7). He observed that only God could give the solution (32: 13). He said: "Job, you consider God your enemy, and yourself pure, but you are not right in doing so (33:9-12). God is not an enemy seeking your destruction, He speaks of redemption" (33:24-33). Elihu also spoke of God's greatness (Job 37).

8. Then God spoke to Job out of a thunderstorm about His might, creation, and His providence (38-40:2). This caused Job to become small in his own eyes (40:4-5).

9. Again Jehovah spoke to Job, causing him to recant and do penance, showing repentance in dust and ashes (42:1-6). In God's presence he understood that "in me, that is, in my flesh, good does not dwell" (Rom. 7:18).

10. Upon this God could show "compassion according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses" (Lam. 3:32). First towards Job's friends for whom Job was allowed to be the mediator, bringing the sacrifice.

11. Then towards Job, who received back twice as much as he had before.

Lesson

No one on earth was like Job. Nevertheless, God, looking into the very corners of his servant's heart, saw there was something that was not to His glory (Job 29; 30).

First of all God drew attention to Job's great piety, but then He proceeded to teach Job to judge himself in the light of God (Job 40:4-5 and 42:1-6). In the end Job no longer thought anything of himself. This is the end of which James 5:11 speaks. God's first purpose was reached at the end of chapter two. But then God uses Job's friends to prepare him for his encounter with God.

His friends did not serve Job. They caused him to justify himself more and more, and to praise himself (see Job 29; 30). But he whom the Lord praises is proven (2 Cor. 10:18). Any good found within Job was only grace. When he came to see this, he no longer praised himself but God. In all this, Job's faith was continually evident (16:20; 19:25-26). He requested an umpire, an arbitrator, and demanded a direct answer from God (9:33-35; 16:19-21; 31:35).

Scripture speaks of testing, chastening, and judgment:

Testing strengthens our faith, so that it may bring glory to God's name: Caleb, Daniel, Abram. The genuineness of faith becomes evident thereby (e.g. Dan. 6, Gen. 22).

Chastening keeps and cleanses us. Paul (2 Cor. 12:7); the Hebrews (Heb. 12:5-11).

Judgment serves to keep us from being condemned with the world (1 Pet. 4:17; 1 Cor. 11:32).

To be cont'd