

THE FELLOWSHIP TO WHICH ALL CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED (1)

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Bible speaks only of one Christian fellowship: "God is faithful, by whom ye have been called into [the] fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

The early Assembly

The Assembly (or Church) of God on earth came into existence on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 2). In that glorious beginning no one knew of or acknowledged any other fellowship than just one. All walked in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Unfortunately this tremendous time didn't last very long. Ruin, division and world-conformity soon made inroads. Spiritual leaders lacking spiritual power took the lead. For centuries the professing church of God was characterized by the ignorance, superstition, deadness, and idolatry of the dark Middle Ages. Then came the Reformation. Many forgotten truths were once again placed on the candlestick. But also this wonderful time lasted but a very short while. Much of the spiritual strength was lost when help was sought from the political powers and trust was put in princes.

A spiritual Movement

In the first half of the nineteenth century a revival took place under the leading of the Holy Spirit. Many regained attention for truths long forgotten. Prominent men and women, of all strata of society, refused unscriptural ecclesiastical connections. They once again met each other in Christian assemblies, gathering to no other name than that of the risen and glorified Lord. They didn't know any other fellowship than that taught by the Word of God.

No wonder the devil continually attacked this much-blessed and God-glorifying movement. All too soon the enemy succeeded to creep in. Many divisions have weakened and broken down this glorious testimony.

Questions being asked

In the midst of all this ruin and confusion in the Christian testimony many serious Christians of our days are discouraged. They no longer know what path to take.

Doesn't God give direction in His Word as to the path a Christian ought to take? Doesn't there remain anything else for him to do than to select that fragment of the church that seems most attractive to him? Listening in confusion and total despondency to the voices of all the competing denominations, must he give up all hope to ever discover a Godly path in this time of ruin, and settle, in desperation, for the path of least resistance?

There is a clear answer to all these questions. A Christian does not have to choose himself in this important matter. He does not have to remain in confusion.

"The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way" (Ps. 25:9).

"If any one desire to practise His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine whether it is of God" (Jn. 7:17).

Why don't some do what the Word of God asks them to do?

Christians who remain in the denominations of which they know that they will be judged by Christ for their unscripturalness come up with all kinds of excuses.

Some use their family relationships as an excuse: They very much like to keep the unity within the family. One does not want to "break" with husband, wife, parents, children, etc. Family ties are placed before faithfulness to the Lord. Is that right? Shouldn't the Lord have the first place?

Others remain in the place where they are because they would have to travel so far if they didn't. Personal ease and comfort are valued over faithfulness to the Lord.

Others again make it known that they stay in the place, unscriptural as it might be perhaps, where they feel they can be useful. Allegedly, going to the place where the Lord would have them would make them less useful. Here the service is valued over the Master and "usefulness" of the servant over the will of the Lord.

What a tremendous change would come about if all believers would stand for their convictions. How needful it is that we all obey the Lord and His Word; cost what it may.

Warnings in the Bible

King Saul's history has been written as a warning for us (1 Cor. 10:11). God had charged him to slay Amalek, to kill them all, even the animals. "And Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and beasts of the second bearing, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not devote them to destruction" (1 Sam. 15:9). When Samuel meets Saul, he says that he has fulfilled the word of the Lord. Then Samuel asks him what all the bleating of the sheep was about and the lowing of the oxen. Saul responded that the people had spared the best of the flock and of the cattle "to sacrifice to Jehovah thy God" (v. 15).

Isn't this praise-worthy? Saul had spared the best of the flock, but not to enrich himself. He didn't act from self-seeking motives. Oh well, he hadn't exactly done what the Lord had told him, but didn't his wish to glorify God and his desire to sacrifice to him make up for that?

Not so! The king had disobeyed, a deed that couldn't be forgiven him. Through this deed he lost his kingdom. The answer of Samuel was most important: "Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, attention than the fat of rams. For rebellion is [as] the sin of divination, and self-will is [as] iniquity and idolatry" (vv. 22-23). How withering are these words of Samuel. What a high price had Saul to pay because he had departed from the Word of God, although, according to his words, his purpose was laudable, he wanted to use the best of Amalek's flocks to bring sacrifices to the Lord!

How indescribably sad is the end of Saul's life. He goes to a woman with a spirit of divination to hear about the future. He was hard-pressed by the Philistines, the enemies of the Lord. His sons, among whom Jonathan, had already been killed by the enemy. Then, in desperation, he commits suicide by falling on his sword. His armour is put in the temple of Ashtaroth and the Philistines hang his body on the wall of Beth-Shan. It is indeed a terrible warning and example for us.

This is a serious lesson for Christians who come up with arguments that seem so useful (utilitarian arguments) to justify their staying in the place where they are although they know it to be an unscriptural place. Isn't their disobedience one and the same as Saul's? Isn't there a strong similarity to what Saul did: saving the best of the flock to bring a sacrifice rather than being obedient? Is the fat of rams more important than obedience?

How many servants of the Lord, who refuse to go where the Lord wants them to be because their usefulness would be restricted, have found out that their spiritual power abated, if it wasn't entirely removed, and that their usefulness indeed was restricted. If we want to have strength *with* God, we must be right with God. And without spiritual strength we cannot be useful either.

Upright Christians are alarmed

In these days of shameless world-conformity in the confessing church of God, of wide-spread liberalism preached from the pulpits, upright Christians are alarmed. The voice of the Lord comes to them: "Come out from the midst of them... and I will receive you; and I will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to Me for sons and daughters, says [the] Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).

Why this article was written

On my travels, I met many Christians in a condition of despair, indecisiveness, and despondency. Many young Christians who are still at the place where their parents are without knowing why, have a true interest for the truth of God's Word. They like to know what Christian fellowship is all about. Often we hear the worrying question: "I really want to know why I am where I am."

It is to answer questions like these that this is written. We intend to give a short summary of the Church, the Assembly of God, how it ought to be arranged and to function according to God's thoughts. We also want to see whether the various denominations answer to these standards of God.

Finally we want to discuss the question whether those assemblies which confess to meet unto the name of the Lord Jesus are a part of one total, and therefore united to each other, or that every assembly ought to be *independent* from the others. When someone looks over the ruins of a historical building, and finds here and there a fragment, he is likely to ask how all these pieces fit together. It would be a tremendous help to him if he could have the plan of the building in its original condition and beauty before him. That is why we too want to look first of all at the overall picture of God's plan for His Assembly.

It is, however, essential that we don't go too much into detail. We must be satisfied with an overall view of the truth, otherwise this series would become too voluminous.

To be cont'd

THE GLORY OF THE FATHER AND THE SON (2)

—H. Rossier

John 13:31-32

In chapters 13-17 of John's Gospel, the Lord presents Himself to His disciples in the new, heavenly, position He would take after His sufferings. He speaks with them about the resources, the blessings, that would be their portion as a result of His departure; thereby He stresses again and again the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter. He wants them to understand that it is better for them that He departs.

Early in chapter 13 we find the expression that we also came across in the previous chapter: "Jesus, knowing that *His hour had come* that He should depart out of this world to the Father..." These words are actually the introduction to the chapters that follow. The Lord presents death as something of which the results are already seen. He departs out of this world to the Father. In chapter 12 we saw that the hour had come in which the *Son of man* would be glorified, but here the hour has come that the *Son of God* returns to the Father whom He had come to reveal in this world. He rises from the earthly supper where He had been sitting with His disciples and leaves this relationship He had with them while here below, to unite them with Himself in heaven. He returns there, and from there He bends Himself full of love down over them while exercising a part of His high priestly service, His work as Advocate, to wash the feet of the disciples, thereby enabling them to have part, or fellowship, with Him in this new heavenly position. For this it was necessary that His hour had come, that He had gone through the suffering of death.

After He had washed their feet, He was *troubled in Spirit* at the thought the betrayal by "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I confided," who had "lifted up [his] heel against Me" (Ps. 41:9). But once the betrayer had gone out into the night, the Lord calls out: "Now is the Son of man glorified" (v. 31). This "now" is not the same as that in the previous chapter. The "now" of His being troubled was the bitter foretaste of the cross (12:27). But in chapter 13 it speaks of the present "now" of the glory of the Son of man upon the cross.

And just as we have another "now," so we have another glory. In chapter 12:23 it was a future glory resulting from the suffering of the Lord. But here we see the present glory of the cross itself, the glorification of the Son of man by that which in the eyes of the world was the height of shame. The bright light that emanated from the Man who was counted among the evildoers and transgressors shines from the cross itself, the place of shame and curse for Him. *In the midst of shame, His glory shone.*

What constituted this glory of the cross? Man's disobedience had cost him every trace of the glory of God; all was lost to him, because he had dishonoured the holy God. But now a Man arises to do the will of God, He comes to obey, He is entirely alone, He has no support whatever, neither on earth, nor from the side of man. He comes to finish the work that

is entrusted to Him. He goes to the cross and heaven is closed to Him, not even God comes to His aid. He takes this work upon Himself as the *Son of man*, not as the Son of God.

Thus He restores in His Person the glory to man, while glorifying God by his complete obedience. His indescribable suffering, that found its summit in His being forsaken from God because upon this Man, made sin, the wrath of God was to be poured out, this suffering only brought to light how *absolutely perfect* He was. And that is precisely the content of this glory. The Son of man has been glorified, the glory of His Person shines forth from the cross.

But He is also glorified in that *He*, by Himself, accomplishes a work that is beyond measure of which the results will be seen in all eternity, a work to which nothing can be added. Seen from our side this work is the saving of sinners, which in itself is of infinite significance. Just think how not only our sins and its results (bondage to Satan, death, and judgment) have been done away, but that men have been brought nigh to God and become children of the Father. Sons of God have been brought to glory and made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. But besides, the enemy has been conquered, the works of the devil have been destroyed and sin will be taken out of the world. Thinking of these results, the Lord could say: "Now is the Son of man glorified."

But then He adds, "And God is glorified in Him." What, more than anything else, made the work on the cross so glorious was that God was glorified there and that this glorification was accomplished by a Man! There was one Man — and in what circumstances! — to glorify God.

The Lord Jesus says here that *God* is glorified in Him, not that the *Father* is glorified. Of course the Father is glorified by the Son. His entire life as Man here below was to His glory, so that He could say: "I have glorified *Thee* on the earth" (John 17:4). And on the cross the Father was glorified too by the manifestation of His love in giving His Son. But here the accent is on the fact that God is glorified in all the perfection and the fulness of His Being. God who is light, God who is love, God in His holiness, in His righteousness, in His majesty, and that in connection with the question of sin. All His glory was publicly maintained and before the eyes of all brought to light, once and for all eternity revealed upon the cross!

God has been glorified, not by the eternal Son, but by a Man who was counted among the transgressors, who had to take the place of the lowest humiliation. He was a Man of whom a corrupted world turned away; the world showed its disgust for Him by spitting upon Him and mocking Him. He was a Man for whom the heavens clothed themselves with darkness, a Man forsaken by God who hid His face from Him!

"If God be glorified in Him," then the only response can be: "God also shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall glorify Him immediately" (v. 32). God glorifies *the Man* in Himself: He has Him share, or rather, He brings Him *into* His own glory. Will He postpone this glorification? No, He brings Him immediately into it. God's glorification is so complete, so definite, so absolute, that there is not a single reason to delay the reward that God owes *this* Man, by making Him *the Centre of the divine glory!*

When we think of it that this place of the Son of man is also the place of His own, that all His obedience and all His suffering — and what suffering! — also were intended to give us a place with Him in that glory, don't our eyes then fill with tears of thankfulness? Would we not praise the love of the Son of Man, our adorable Lord and Saviour?

To be cont'd

BOCHIM

—J. van Dijk

Judges 2:1-5

"And the Angel of Jehovah came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you to the land which I swore unto your fathers: and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; and as for you, ye shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars; but ye have not hearkened unto my voice. Why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be [scourges] in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you. And it came to pass, when the Angel of Jehovah spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice and wept. And they called the name of that place Bochim; and they sacrificed there to Jehovah."

Why did all this take place? Well, it did not all happen so suddenly. First the children of Israel seemed to go on well. They asked the Lord, "Who shall go up first?" Was it that they really meant: who can take it easy first? If Judah is to go then we don't have to bother as yet. The Lord knows, we wonder, and the results seem to tell. Judah (praise) is the first and foremost to attack, and in it Simeon (hearing) shares with him. In this we see how things are for us. As long as we praise God for what He has done for us, as long as we hearken to His voice, things remain reasonably well. Although even then, we can do godly things in a fleshly way; they cut off thumbs and great toes. It is rather questionable whether it was of the Lord that they did so, even though King Adoni-Zedek took it as just punishment from the Lord. But then we read: "He did not dispossess the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Isn't it strange? Their mighty God seemed insufficient for chariots of iron? Is there here not a subtle indication that they fought their fights in their own strength, forgetting altogether that it was the Lord who gave them all their victories? Are we not just like them? We often seem so faithful, but how does God rate our "faithful" actions?

If we really want an answer to this question we should do as we do in Israel's case. When we want to know how God viewed their actions, we look at the way God continued with them. We should do the same for ourselves. Why, after so many victories, have we so many failures? Because in the victory our hearts were occupied with self and God has seen it, and has not continued on with us. That, I believe, is a fair deduction. But back to Israel.

From then on we read: "And the children of Benjamin did not dispossess..." A little later, "And Manasseh did not dispossess... And then, "And Ephraim did not dispossess... Zebulun did not dispossess... Asher did not dispossess... Naphtali did not dispossess..." And it seems that the rest of the tribes are not even worth mentioning.

How does this speak of us? What an utter lack of diligence in the things of God is found among those who are God's people. And don't miss this: the Lord does not say: "Israel did not dispossess." No, He mentions the individual tribes. If the Church has suffered defeat, it is because you and I have failed. Not us collectively, but you and I personally. We don't have to look elsewhere but in our own hearts. Judah didn't need to say, "I failed but a little, look how the others failed." How much better if they said, "I failed but a little, and look how much fruit my example has borne; had I only been faithful in all, how would it have encouraged the others, how different would all have been." But now they can only acknowledge that they were the leaders in the departure.

Now let us see how the Lord responds to all of this. The Angel of Jehovah leaves the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled from off the people of Israel. He exchanges it for the place of weeping. Yes, our God is deeply sad about our half-heartedness in making use of the help He provides, about our "semi-obedience" (is there such a thing?). The Lord tells them, I have done My part, but as for you... Did they, did we, throw down their altars? Did they, did we, refuse to make covenants with the inhabitants of the land? The Lord doesn't say, "Ye have partly done so," He says, "Ye have not hearkened unto My voice." We had better realize that this is what God says to us too. He does not say: "You have partly done what I told you." He says, "You did not listen."

"Wait a moment," you may react, "I have always heard that the Lord begins with commending that which we have done well, as we read it in the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor." This is true, but there He addresses those who failingly have done all they could under very adverse circumstances. If you have not failed to read the letter to Laodicea, which resembles our condition generally more than any other, you must have noticed that there He does not commend anything they have done, because they are pleased with themselves while they are indifferent to His interests. And that was Israel's condition as it is often ours today. He was ready to meet them every day in the place of their strength, Gilgal, but they failed to meet Him there.

What a profound change. Instead of giving help, the Lord uses the very enemies to be overcome as scourges in their sides. He will do the same to us. It is a hard remedy, but He who loves us, loves us too much to let us go on as if nothing is wrong. He causes us to weep. Our weeping seems good. The problem is: it *seems* good, but it wasn't in Israel's case, it wasn't in Esau's either. Sorrow to God has very evident and beneficial results. But, though we often weep, there are no good results. How come? We weep because we dislike the new circumstances we brought over ourselves. But we don't weep because we grieved our Lord. Our weeping often is but self-pity. If it were different, godly results would be seen.

These are serious considerations. But can we help but acknowledge that they are right? Many of us have been weeping about problems for years. Why is there no relief? We don't want to give up those things that are a hindrance to God to bless us. There simply is no other answer. For God is ever ready to bless when we truly do His will. We love the "altars" of the world, we want our "covenants" with the world. Unless we are ready to part with these, weeping will be our lot till the Lord comes.

THE PROBLEM OF UNANSWERED PRAYER (1)

—J. Rouw

The subject before us is the problem of unanswered prayers. I hope that after we have considered this subject, we can say: "We might well have used the title: The blessing of unanswered prayers." But to discover this, we must first read a few lines from the Word of God.

But let us begin with a few generalities about prayer, for prayer is certainly most important in a person's life. Our bodies have two essential needs, food for our stomachs, and oxygen or air for our lungs. Let one of these be missing and we die. Spiritually, for our souls, we also need these two things. We feed ourselves spiritually by the Bible, the Word of God. And prayer is the breath of man's spiritual life. In prayer we have an exchange of thoughts with God. He says in Psalm 8 1: 10, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." God loves to hear, someone pray!

Now something else. Once, when I was hospitalized, some friends and acquaintances wrote me. Some said: "We're praying for you!" That is nice and comforting, to pray for each other. And it helps too! But at one time a brother visited me who said: "There is something much more important than our prayer for you!" I asked him what that might be. He said: "That the Lord Jesus prays for you!" Do we ever think of that? When we have been converted, and have become a child of God, we may know that the Lord Jesus prays for His own. He is the Son of God, who has died on the cross, who is risen and who is now glorified in heaven. He lives to pray for us and to intercede for us. Let us not forget this while we cover our subject, for that is really most important, that He, our precious Saviour, thinks of us, keeps us, and lives for us.

Then, a very short remark about one prayer that will always be answered. A prayer that God has never yet left unanswered. That is when a sinner approaches God for grace. He doesn't leave him unanswered. The Lord Jesus has never yet refused someone who came to Him.

In this series we speak mainly of the prayer of a Christian, a believer, but if there are among our readers some who are not yet certain of forgiveness of sins, who don't know whether they have been accepted or not, who don't know if they are redeemed, then I have an encouraging remark for them. When you say: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner," then, at that very moment, He will do just that for you. To put it differently, if someone bows down before God and says uprightly: "O God, I am lost, I am so guilty," at that same moment all his sins are forgiven. That is what God's Word says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins..." (1 Jn. 1:9). So what should we do? Confess our sins, acknowledge that we are lost. You get it? He who was pure, without sin, who did not once do a wrong deed, or said a wrong word, hung on the cross. Not for Himself, but for me and for you. There God poured out His wrath over Him, over all sins of all who would in time believe on Him. He paid for them there. That debt He paid during the three hours of darkness, while hanging on the cross! If a sinner came to God asking for mercy, for forgiveness and God would not give it, then God would not be honest. For the Lord Jesus paid for such a person. Could God say then: "Yes, but he must pay again"? God doesn't do this. God only punishes once. On the cross I was punished and all who, by grace, are the children of God have been punished in Christ when He hung there on the cross. Do you all know this? Is there still someone who doubts? Once you have confessed your guilt and believe (or trust) in the work that has been finished on the cross, then there is no need to pray for forgiveness any longer, but you may give thanks. Give thanks! Then you will eternally give thanks, eternally sing of God's mercies.

In Philippians 4:6-7 it says: "Be careful for nothing (don't worry about anything), but in all things, with prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." That means that if we are a child of God and know that our sins have been forgiven, then we may make all our cares and all our needs every time again known to God. Every day! Then it says: "Be careful for nothing..." yet, at times we do worry: "How will things go today, and next week? I just don't know any more what to do!" But He says: "Don't worry about anything, but let your desires be made known to God through prayer and supplication (to supplicate is praying more fervently) with thanksgiving." That means that you may give thanks in advance. And is the answer then: "Let it be known to God and you will receive all you prayed for, you will receive everything God heard you pray for?" No, it continues: "And the peace of God, which surpasses every understanding, shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus." That is the beauty of prayer. When you have told God everything, you can be at rest, then you have given it into His hands and you may wait for what He is going to do. Doubtless there will be believers who will say: "How infinitely good is God! How often has He answered our prayer." We sing in a hymn:

Has not frequently the issue
Been His rescue?
God is good, yes, God alone!
Never yet His care has faltered,

Never altered;
Present 'tis when hope seems gone.

It is beautiful to experience that God wants to listen to our prayer. And the strange thing is: God works these prayers within us! When we pray, God knows it already. Don't think that we are telling God anything new when we go and pray. Through the Holy Spirit, God works in us what to pray. But why would that be, if He knows it already anyway? Because it is of such great importance for ourselves. Prayer is the breathing of the soul. To have that quiet contact with God, is approaching God, to have fellowship with Him. Once a foreign poet wrote a few lines that went something like this:

I saw a man of steel,
A man of great renown,
He just came from his prayer room,
He'd, before God, kneeled down.

Because he had kneeled in God's presence, he had power. Prayer is the source of power whereby one comes into fellowship with God. He speaks to us through His Word and we answer Him in prayer. Then we have fellowship, an intimate contact, with this great, almighty, eternal God.

Many, as I, must say: "I pray far too little." We think: "I first must do this, and then that. Once I have done this again, it has been a good day." Yes, but how about prayer? Thereby the things you do are blessed. Prayer is a well of true blessing. There was a sister, a Christian lady. She was married and had four children. But she became weak, she wasn't very strong. Upstairs she had a little room where her mother-in-law lay in bed. She was sick and old, couldn't do anything anymore. Yes, for what reason lay this old woman there in that little room? And the young woman had the care for four little ones and her husband. At times she was so tired, that young woman. Once she came upstairs near the little room and heard a voice saying: "Lord God, please help my daughter-in-law, she is so weak and is so busy, please give her strength."

Then the young mother knew why old grandma was still living. She lived to pray. Perhaps we cannot do much, but we can all pray. There are missionaries who go out to the mission field. We can't all go, but we can pray. Then God gives them strength! Then God will bless their work and thereby, also through our prayer, people will be converted. That is how powerful and mighty prayer is.

To be cont'd

OUTLINE FOR BIBLE STUDY (34)

71. DAVID'S DEATH. SOLOMON AS KING. SOLOMON'S WISDOM. — 1 Kings 1-4; 1 Chronicles 29:10-28

Outline

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| 1. Adonijah Exalted Himself | 1 Ki. 1:1-53 |
| 2. Death of David | 1 Ki. 2:1-11; 1 Chr. 29:10-28 |
| 3. Solomon's First Actions Adonijah, Joab, Abiathar, and Shimei | 1 Ki. 2:12-46 |
| 4. Solomon's prayer | 1 Ki. 3:1-15 |
| 5. Solomon's Judgment | 1 Ki. 3:16-28 |
| 6. Solomon's Wisdom | 1 Ki. 4:29-34 |

Explanation

1. Adonijah, with his followers, sought to make himself king in his father's stead.
2. Before dying, David blessed Jehovah and admonished the people and his son to follow the Lord with uprightness of heart (1 Chr. 29; 1 Ki. 2). He delivered God's enemies into the hand of Solomon to judge them.
3. At the instruction of his father David, Solomon dealt with these four rebels.

4. Solomon loved Jehovah and the Lord allowed him to choose whatever his heart desired (1 Ki. 3:5; Ps. 37:4). His prayer was an expression of childlike faith, full of submissiveness, meekness and truth, and Jehovah therefore gave him above all which he asked or thought (Eph. 3:20; Mt. 6:33).

5. Solomon's first public decision established him throughout Israel as a man of wisdom. His judgment showed the wisdom of God, which searches the hearts despite all lies and hypocrisy, and knows how to bring all evil to light (Ps. 139:1-4).

6. Solomon was the wisest man in all the earth. The enemies were defeated and there was peace and the fear of God.

Lesson

David, in giving over the reign to Solomon is again a picture of Christ. When the time of grace, typified by David's reign, is over, Christ will begin His reign in glory as the righteous Judge, judging all the kingdoms of earth, this is typified in Solomon.

Israel enjoyed rich blessings under Solomon the Prince of Peace (1 Ki. 4:24-25). His kingdom is a picture of the coming Kingdom of Peace of Jesus Christ (Rev. 10:4-6). Then there is no longer grace for those whom the Lord has endured during the day of grace.

72. BUILDING AND DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE — 1 Kings 5-8; 2 Chronicles 6-7

Outline

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| 1. League Between Solomon and Hiram | 1 Ki. 5:1-11 |
| 2. The Building of the Temple | 1 Ki. 6-7 |
| 3. The Dedication and Solomon's Prayer | 1 Ki. 8 |

Explanation

1. Through God's guidance, Hiram, a heathen king, but a good friend of David, entered into contract with Solomon to serve Israel with all his means and power and to furnish the supplies and workmen for building the temple.

2. A remarkable thing in the construction of this large and beautiful building was that there was no hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was being built. Everything came pre-fabricated and fitted to the building site.

3. Almost 500 years after the exodus from Egypt, God's chosen people had a house of worship where God again was willing to dwell among them as He had once in the tabernacle. In his prayer Solomon expresses the need for grace from God in all kinds of circumstances that could (and did) come over Israel.

Lesson

David, in his untiring preparation was a type of Christ, who loved the Church and has given Himself for her. David gathered much material for the temple and offered it to God, who had given him all these things.

Hiram also shared in the blessings. Prophetically this looks forward to the might and majesty of the heathen during the Millennium. They will serve and bring homage to Israel (Rev. 21:24-26).

Now believers are the temple of God, built by God Himself (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:20-22). The great and costly stones in Solomon's temple are types of the great value of saved souls.

Solomon's prayer was a prophetic utterance. In it he foresaw all that would befall Israel in days to come. At the dedication they feasted seven days; on the eighth day the people went to their homes, blessing the king and joyful.

To be cont'd

