

Coming Back from Hell Soon

OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS, the news media has reported on the changing concepts in Christianity of ‘hell.’ Most articles published told of getting away from the eternal torment definition of hell. Few were analyzing the Biblical words that are involved in either life, death, or the hereafter.

TRADITIONAL HELL

The “*U.S. News and World Report*” (January 31, 2000), reviewed these changing concepts in an article entitled, “*Hell Hath No Fury*.” The review began by saying:

“Since long before the Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards, struck fear into the hearts of 18th century New Englanders, the threat of hell has served as a potent incentive to refrain from evil and cling to faith. For preachers like Edwards and his spiritual heirs, the eternal stakes were frightfully clear. There was a hell to shun, and a heaven to gain. Hell and its flaming torments were real.

“Edwards would scarcely recognize the hell of today. After decades of near obscurity, the netherworld has taken on a new image—more of a deep funk than a pit of fire. While the traditional infernal imagery still attracts a following, modern visions of eternal perdition as a particularly unpleasant solitary confinement are beginning to emerge, suggesting that hell may not be so hot after all.”

The writer continued to trace the revisionism of hell that has taken place and reviewed the concepts Early Church fathers had of it being a place of sensory torment (by some), and as spiritual suffering (by others). Also, he noted that other religions had concepts akin to Christian religions, saying:

“The threat of painful retribution in the afterlife has counterparts in nearly every major world religion and in some minor ones as well.” He then proceeds to list some examples such as:

OTHER RELIGIONS

Islam having a crater of fire beneath a narrow bridge that all souls must cross to go to paradise. Those whom Allah judges unworthy, fall in and suffer endless physical torment in one of seven layers of hell.

Hinduism requires that souls on the way to reincarnation must pass through one of 21 hells that burn away bad karma. The most wicked are condemned to the lowest hells, where they may be cooked in jars, or eaten by ravens.

Classical Buddhism has seven hot hells complete with torture chambers, a fiery pit, and a quagmire for evildoers.

Jainism (came from Hinduism 2500 years ago) contains three realms, the lowest containing 8.4 million hells where humans are punished for their sins.

Taoism (Chinese religion) teaches that the dead are sent either to a Buddhist paradise, or to one of several hells.

It is noteworthy that eternal torment is part of the lore of tribal religions in Asia and Africa, as well as of major religions. Why has this happened? The answer was given by Jesus when he spoke of the Devil, the great Adversary of God, and said, "He is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) All false religion contains this major lie of a punitive hell. The Adversary's intent has been to dishonor God by making him the author of it.

The article contained two sets of statistics as follows:

Do you think there is a hell?

Yes	64%
No	25%
Don't know	9%

What comes closest to your idea of hell?

1997 NOW

<i>Hell is a real place where people suffer eternal fiery torments</i>	48%	34%
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<i>Hell is an anguished state of existence eternally separated from God</i>	46%	53%
<i>Don't know</i>	4%	11%

ANNIHILATIONISM

In spite of the tenacity with which Christian religionists hold onto a punitive hell, it is gratifying that this latest write-up on the subject quotes a small but growing number of conservative theologians promoting a third position that the end of the wicked is destruction, not eternal suffering. The article says:

“Proponents of this theory, called ‘annihilationism,’ argue that traditional belief in unending torment is based more on pagan philosophy than on a correct understanding of Scripture. They base their belief on New Testament passages that warn of ‘everlasting destruction’ (II Thess. 1:9) and ‘the second death’ (Rev. 20:14) for those who reject God, and on the Hebrew Prophet Ezekiel’s admonition that ‘the soul that sinneth, it shall die.’ (Ezek. 18:4) They also raise ethical arguments: ‘How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness’ as to inflict ‘everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been?’ A God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God.”

IMMORTALITY

It was also observed by some of these theologians (and we quote from the article): “that the traditional belief in unending punishment is linked to the Greek notion of the innate immortality of the soul—a belief that is based more on Plato than on the Bible. The immortality of which the Christian is assured is not inherent in himself or in his soul but is bestowed by God.”

Again we see how Satan’s first lie was responsible for belief in the immortality of the soul. God gave Adam and Eve explicit instructions, as recorded in Genesis: “of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Gen. 2:17

In the Garden of Eden, when Eve told the serpent of these instructions from God, Satan (in his use of the serpent) said: “Ye shall not surely die.” (Gen. 3:4) Hence, as Jesus said of him, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” (John 8:44) Before Plato proposed that man has an immortal soul, Satan proposed it about four thousand years earlier.

Is it not strange that mainline Christianity has preferred to believe Satan’s lie rather than God’s direct statement to Adam? The Scriptures speak of man’s mortality, and make it plain that immortality is a gift from God.

The Apostle Paul writes of it, saying that faithful footstep followers of Jesus will be given immortality as a reward. (I Cor. 15:51-57) This basic error—the teaching that man’s soul is immortal—has been instrumental in believing in a hell of eternal torment.

THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL

What, then, is the truth about hell? God gave the ancient prophet named Job enough information to clarify the state of those who die and go to *sheol*, the Hebrew word for the Biblical hell. Job is among the first of the prophets to confirm that the righteous and the wicked go to hell when they die, whereas—according to the theory of the Dark Ages—only the wicked go to hell. This important truth, as well as other information concerning *sheol*, is found in Job 14:13-15.

Great calamity had come upon Job. His flocks and his herds were destroyed; his family was destroyed; he lost his health—breaking out with boils from head to foot—and his good wife turned against him, saying, “Curse God, and die.” (Job 2:9) Job prayed: “O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.”—Job 14:13-15

According to the teachings of the Dark Ages, *sheol*, or hell, was a place where God visited his wrath upon his enemies. But here we find Job, a righteous servant of God, asking God to let him go to *sheol*—the Bible

hell—in order to escape his wrath! Job asked to be hidden in *sheol* until God’s wrath was past.

APPOINTED TIME

No one who believed the teachings of the Dark Ages on the subject of hell expected that God would ever remember them favorably once they died and were consigned to eternal torment. But Job did not have that viewpoint. Job, one of God’s prophets, asked to be hidden in hell *only* until God’s wrath be past, and then he prayed, “That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me.” (Job 14:13) Job realized that in this prayer he had asked God to let him die, and then he asked the question, “If a man die [if I die], shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time [in death] will I wait, till my change [from death to life] come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.”—Job 14:15

Job, having asked if a man dies shall he live again, answers his own question, and assures us that this is to be the experience of humankind, that those who die—and all die—shall live again, and that they shall be called forth from death in the resurrection. The Creator, having created them to inhabit the earth, will exercise his power to restore them to life, that they might, in harmony with his glorious arrangement, be given an opportunity to live on the earth forever.

Here, then, is one of the Old Testament’s definite assurances that those who go into the Bible hell shall return; that they do not go to hell to be tortured forever, but to rest in death until the Lord’s time comes to carry out the final great feature of his plan of human redemption and salvation.

DYING AS A BABE

Job’s experience of suffering continued for a long time, and before he reached the point of asking God to let him die that he might be free from his suffering, he expressed the thought that it would have been better for him had he died when he was a baby. This thought is expressed in Chapter 3: “Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should suck? For then I should have lain down and been quiet; I should have slept; then I should have been at rest.”—Job 3:11-13, *Revised Standard Version*

This is most revealing, indeed, in view of the creeds of the Dark Ages. In most instances it is believed that babies go instantly to heaven when they die, but this was not Job's expectation. He declares that had he died when he was a baby, he would have 'lain still and been quiet.' Also, 'I should have slept.' Concluding this description of what would have resulted from having died as a baby, he says, 'then had I been at rest.' Briefly, Job is here saying that had he died as a baby he would have been still and quiet, that he would have slept and been at rest. This does not seem like the description of a happy infant in heaven, or of a tortured one in a credal hell.

But Job does not leave the thought by describing what it would have meant to die as a baby. In verse 14 he adds that in this condition of dead babies there are also "kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves." (Job 3:14) 'The kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves,' could well be a reference to the custom of Job's day to prepare one's own tomb in advance and to fill it with treasure which it was hoped could be used by the dead king or counselor. But in any case, it is here made plain that kings and counselors of the earth in death are in exactly the same condition as those who die as babies. They are quiet, they sleep, and are at rest.

ALL AT REST

In verse 15, Job adds to the category of those who would be quiet and sleep and be at rest—namely, "princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver." If it is a sin to be rich, then these rich men referred to by Job did not go to a place of torment when they died, but to a condition of quietness and rest.

In this narrative we find a most surprising statement—surprising, that is, to those who believe in the Dark Age creeds. Job says that "there the wicked cease from troubling." (Job 3:17) This indicates beyond a doubt that, in Job's estimation, even the wicked are asleep and are at rest in death. And to this Job adds, "and there the weary be at rest." Death is a state of unconsciousness, a state which you could liken to rest, where babies and kings and counselors and princes and the wicked all rest in death.

In verses 18 and 19, Job continues: “There the prisoners rest together; ... and the servant is free from his master.” There is no exception in death. All are in the same state or condition. They are all resting, waiting, although unconsciously, for the resurrection.

Then Job sums up his soliloquy by adding, “Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?” (vss. 20-22) The creeds of the Dark Ages insist that life and misery and bitterness of soul are the heritage of those who go into death, into the Bible hell. But this is not true, as we have already noted. Job prayed to go to the Bible hell in order that he might escape suffering.

All that are in the grave (the Bible hell) are coming back soon. Jesus promised this when he said, “Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28,29, *RSV*) What a glorious day that will be for all mankind!

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Responsibility in Marriage and Singleness

Key Verse: “*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*”

—*I Corinthians 6:19*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 7:1-5, 8-16

IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE principal part of this epistle was written in answer to some questions which had been sent to the Apostle in a letter from the Corinthian church. The first question asked: “Is it proper for a man to marry?” Paul, as a follower of Jesus, advises that a New Creature who decides to marry, would be wise in every way to choose a mate ‘in the Lord.’ He says, “I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs, ... But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided.”—*I Cor. 7:32-34, New International Version*

The Apostle Paul taught that those who are married are to be faithful to their spouses, while those who are single are to practice celibacy. (*I Cor. 7:1-16*) In this respect he said, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”—*I Cor. 6:15-20*

God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (*Gen. 2:18*), indicating that he did not approve celibacy for natural man. In marriages

that are ‘in the Lord,’ woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. (I Cor. 11:11) Commenting on the first institution of marriage, Jesus said, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matt. 19:4-6) Paul said, “Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other.”—Heb. 13:4, *Today’s English Version*

We have in Adam and Eve the first institution of marriage: God made the woman out of the man in Eden so the man should consider and treat her as part of himself. No one hates his own flesh, but nourishes and supports it. So should a man deal with his wife. And the woman should consider that the man was not made for her, but that she was made for the man. Derived under God, her being from him, she should reverence her husband. (Eph. 5:33) A blessed union is one that respects God’s institution, and where marriage is in the Lord!

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Let Love Lead

Key Verse: “If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.

But if any man love God, the same is known of him.”

—I Corinthians 8:2,3

***Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 8:1-7***

THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID, “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. ... As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. ... Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.” (I Cor. 8:1,4,7) The Corinthian Christians were in the midst of an

idolatrous people, and had come out from them. They had heard and accepted the Gospel of Christ, and now desired to be entirely separate from idolaters.

Much of the meat sold in the market was often first offered to idols and available at a lower price. Many times, only a portion of the animal was taken for the sacrifice, and the excess sold in the market. It was not easy to know which had been offered in sacrifice to some heathen deity and which had not. Some Christians were strictly opposed to partaking of such meat, but with others, knowing the meat was not injured and since there was no change, it made no difference.

The matter was referred to Paul for solution who, in essence said: ‘About eating meat sacrificed to idols, an idol is nothing at all. We as God’s people have an understanding of the Divine Word and the liberties wherewith Christ makes us free. Thus, we can eat such meat and not injure our consciences. We know that there is only one God, although there are many that are called gods or lords, whether in heaven or on earth.’ For us there is only “one God, the Father,” who is the creator of

all things, for whom we exist, “and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (I Cor. 8:6), and through whom we live.

He said that we, as the Lord’s people having knowledge, are not merely to consider our own liberties, but to abstain from our liberties in the interest of others to whom they might prove to be injurious stumbling blocks. Although the knowledge we have that there is only one God, and sacrifice to idols means nothing, we cannot ignore the knowledge and feelings of other brethren.

The Apostle sums up the matter when he declares that, as for himself, if he found it necessary, in order that he might be a help to the brethren and not a stumbling block to any, he would take pleasure in denying himself, not only the meat offered to idols, but all meat of every kind as long as he lived. Thus Paul manifested the true spirit of brotherly love; and every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ should seek to have this same spirit and sentiment active in all their associations with each other. Whoever is a child of God, not only has liberty, but must also have the spirit of love. “If any man have not the spirit of Christ [love], he is none of his.”—Rom. 8:9

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself.”—Rom. 15:1-3

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Work Together

Key Verses: “*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ... And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*”
—*I Corinthians 12:4, 6*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians 12:4-20, 26

THE APOSTLE PAUL INDICATES that there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but they all come from the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the Lord and we can each do different things yet the same God works in all of us and helps us in everything we do. For instance, on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles and disciples were miraculously filled with the Holy Spirit, each of those assembled from surrounding countries “heard them speak in his own language.”—Acts 2:1-6

Some who had received the gift of the Spirit either spoke or translated in a language of which they previously had no knowledge. Paul said: “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” “One is given ... the word of wisdom; To another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing ...; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.” (I Cor. 12:6,8-10) All these Divinely-provided works were indispensable for the establishment of the Early Church, but many gifts passed away as no longer needed after the apostles died.

Paul points out that all the variations in the manifestations of the Spirit did not mean different spirits, but the one Spirit, working in the entire church, with the one purpose of building them all up as various members in the one body of Christ. (vs. 7) We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body. The picture is that of a human body of many members operating together for the general good and the accomplishment of one general purpose. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and

all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”—I Cor. 12:12

Those being called during the present Gospel Age receive a begetting of the Holy Spirit. They are baptized by the one Spirit into the one body. Christ’s body members are to be fellow sharers in the suffering of the present time. They are to be joint-heirs in the glories that are to follow in the millennial kingdom.

Paul said there is no division in the human body, yet one hand is separate from the other hand; and there is a separation between the hand and the foot. But there is a work for every part of the body to do. The hand and the foot are connected through the head. The brain is in touch with all parts of the body through the nerves. One member cannot say to another, ‘You are not needed;’ for “God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.” (vs. 18) The instructions which are received from the head, our Lord Jesus, are that all members are needful.

The Divine family is bound together in one bond of love and fellowship, confidence, sympathy, harmony and common interest. The honor and glory of one is the honor and glory of all. As Jesus prayed, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”—John 17:21

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What about the Resurrection?

Key Verse: “*Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept ... For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

—*I Corinthians*
15:20, 22

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians
15:20-27, 35-44

A FUNDAMENTAL TEACHING of Christ and his apostles is the fall of man into sin and its penalty—death. On this point, the Apostle Paul said, “As one man’s trespass [Adam’s] led to condemnation for all men, So one man’s [Jesus’] act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men.”—Rom. 5:18, *Revised Standard Version*

In I Corinthians 15:21-23, Paul explains: “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” He explains in another letter, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned

with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—Heb. 2:9

The perfect man, Adam, is the one who sinned and was sentenced to death. In order to redeem him it was necessary that one should be like him, a ransom (a corresponding price), a perfect man, not a sinful man like the race, but holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, the condition of Adam at the time he sinned.

Such a perfect man was given birth by the Virgin Mary after the life of the *Logos* was transferred to her womb. Jesus became the Redeemer of all mankind. But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” (I Cor. 15:35, *RSV*) It will not be the body which dies that will be resurrected. That body returns to dust. In the morning of Messiah’s reign, God through Him will grant each of Adam’s race “a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.”—vs. 38

The saintly few, joint-heirs and associates of Christ, will share in the First Resurrection, to glory, honor and immortality, the Divine nature. Then will come God's blessing upon the world, to give them earthly bodies as a part of the restitution program. It is manifestly much more reasonable for God to give a new body than, as some have surmised, to restore the same body. Not a passage of scripture mentions the resurrection of the body.

Although the prophecy, "On earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14), has not yet been fulfilled, the birth of the babe Jesus was one step toward it; his death on the cross was another; the glorious resurrection and ascension of Jesus to the spirit plane, were other significant steps. The presentation of the merit of his sacrifice to Divine Justice was yet another step in this direction.

The selection of the Church as Messiah's Bride is another, nearly complete. The establishment of the thousand-year Messianic kingdom will complete the blessed prophecy as described in John 5:28,29, *RSV*: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment." The promised blessing of all the families of the earth is drawing near.—Gen. 22:18

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What is Real Love?

Key Verse: “*Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love], these three; but the greatest of these is charity [love].*”
—*I Corinthians 13:13*

Selected Scripture:
I Corinthians
12:31 – 13:13

AFTER ENUMERATING some of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the Early Church, such as speaking with tongues and working miracles, the Apostle Paul, in I Corinthians 12:31, said, “Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” He shows that some of these gifts, being no longer necessary to the church, would pass away, but he was going to tell them of better things that would never pass away. He proceeds to explain that he was speaking of love.

No matter how well they might be able to speak with tongues, or to interpret, or to work miracles, love was a far more important thing for them to have. He names the various qualities of love: joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. The sum of them all is love. This, then, is the ‘more excellent’ thing.

Yet the question naturally arises, What is love? The Bible answers, “God is love.” (I John 4:16) It is impossible, however, to fully describe God in his greatness, so it seems impossible to describe all that would be comprehended in the word ‘love.’ Love is the most powerful thing in the world; therefore love most nearly represents God, because he is the Supreme, Almighty One.

The Apostle says, in describing love, that “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.” (I Cor. 13:4-6, *New International Version*) Regardless of our accomplishments—whether being able to speak eloquently, having knowledge, faith, bestowing all our goods to feed the poor, or sacrificing ourselves—these, without love as a motivating force, make us as nothing.

This love does not stop with those who are appreciative of it, but also goes out to those who are ungrateful, knowing that something is hindering them from attaching any value to such love. Love, then, is so much a part of God's likeness, the thing to be most appreciated, the thing without which all else in life is useless. To be devoid of love is to be wanting in godlikeness.

Whoever would come to a full knowledge of God must first come to an appreciation of his Word and must follow a line of obedience such as would enable him to love the Lord and to appreciate his plan. All things working together—love, appreciation, and a desire to be obedient—lead onward and upward to the goal which the Lord has set before us. Thus it will be with the world in the future, when they will be brought, in God's providence, to a full knowledge and full opportunity, when they shall come to understand God and his righteousness.

As the Apostle says, "Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. ... For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."—I Cor. 13:8-13, *Revised Standard Version*

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Ephraim and Manasseh Blessed

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

VERSES 1-4 “And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. “And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. “And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, “And said unto me, Behold I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”

Jacob was now about to die, and a messenger sent word to Joseph, who quickly came to the bedside of his aged father and brought his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him. On this solemn occasion Jacob had the Lord uppermost in his mind and heart, and related to Joseph the covenant he made with him at Luz, or Bethel. This was when Jacob fled from Esau and he was favored with that wonderful vision of the ladder reaching from earth to heaven with the Lord standing at the top of the ladder and angels ascending and descending upon it.—Gen. 28:10-13

This was a renewal of the covenant which God had made with Abraham, including the promise to bless all the families of the earth, although Jacob did not mention this feature of it to Joseph. Perhaps this was because Joseph’s tribe was not to be the one from which the Messiah, the promised ‘seed,’ would come.

In this reminiscing of Jacob’s wherein the Lord had given him a vision and renewed the Abrahamic covenant with him, the Genesis account of those events says that he journeyed on, “lifting up his feet.” (Gen. 29:1, *Marginal Translation*) The thought evidently is that of renewed hope and confidence; and this assurance was still his, even though now he was about ready to die. He could no longer ‘lift up his feet,’ but his heart was light and full of faith.

VERSES 5-14 “And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. “And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. “And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem.

“And Israel beheld Joseph’s sons, and said, Who are these? “And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. “Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. “And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. “And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. “And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel’s left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel’s right hand, and brought them near unto him. “And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.”

Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph and adopted them as his own sons and made them heads of tribes. Jacob indicates that in some way these two sons of Joseph were to take the places of his own sons Reuben and Simeon; although they are in the list of the spiritual tribes of Israel in Revelation 7, where Manasseh is substituted for Dan. Ephraim’s chief blessing as the adopted son of Jacob seems to have been in the fact that his tribe received the largest and choicest portion of the land when Canaan was divided under the leadership of Joshua.

Jacob’s blessing of his two grandsons reminds us in some ways of his own experience when receiving the parental blessing of Isaac, in that, as it turned out, the firstborn was given second place and his younger brother was put in the position of the firstborn. Joseph, realizing that his

father's eyesight was failing, took precautions to place the boys before him in the proper positions according to their ages. But Jacob deliberately ignored this in giving them his blessing.

VERSES 15-20 “And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, “The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. “And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. “And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. “And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. “And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.”

When Joseph saw that Jacob was blessing Ephraim as the firstborn instead of Manasseh he endeavored to interfere, supposing it to be wrong, (or, according to the *Marginal Translation*, an ‘evil.’) However, Jacob explained vigorously that he knew what he was doing. He explained that while Manasseh would become the head of a great tribe, or people, the tribe of Ephraim would become much more numerous, and that in their relationship to each other the two would be known as Ephraim and Manasseh.

There is no indication in the Scriptures just why this change was made, and apparently the only reason was that Jacob, by prophetic vision, knew that the tribe of Ephraim would become the larger of the two; and when Canaan would be divided among the tribes, his would receive a large and choice portion.

VERSES 21,22 “And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

“Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.”

On his deathbed, nothing was more sure to Jacob than the fact that his people would be brought out of Egypt and into the Land of Promise. ‘Behold I die: but the Lord shall be with you,’ he said to Joseph, ‘and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.’ Although the covenant with Abraham emphasized God’s purpose to bless all the families of the earth through his ‘seed,’ the land which God promised in that covenant seemed often to be the major consideration in the minds of the Israelites, although Jacob did not forget the other feature of the covenant, as we shall see later in connection with his blessing upon Judah.

Jacob did not attempt to assign portions of Canaan to all of his sons, but he did indicate an extra portion which he wished Joseph to have; and when, many long years later, the tribe of Joseph was given its portion, Jacob’s bequest was honored. And not only so, but appropriately enough, Joseph’s bones were buried on this plot of ground. See Joshua 24:32 and John 4:5.

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The Sure Mercies of David

WHEN DAVID BECAME KING, the Lord greatly blessed him with riches and peace, and his heart overflowed with gratitude. As a consequence, his thoughts turned toward the building of a house for the Lord. In a report, David said to the Prophet Nathan, “Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” Nathan replied, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”—II Sam. 7:1-3, *New International Version*

That night, however, God instructed Nathan to tell David that in all of Israel’s travels since leaving Egypt his dwelling had been a tent. (vss. 4-7) Moreover, he had never requested a luxurious house of cedar for himself. In fact, the Lord says, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? ... Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?”—Isa. 66:1, *NIV*

THE PROMISE OF DAVID

Continuing, God said to David, “I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you.” God promised, “I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth.” (II Sam. 7:8,9, *NIV*) He further promised Israel that he would provide them a homeland where they would receive blessings and rest from their enemies—II Sam. 7:10,11

When God said he would build a house for David, he was not thinking of an actual dwelling, but rather an eternal family and a ruling house. Moreover, the throne was to be established by David’s offspring after David’s death. Furthermore, it would last forever.

THE SOLOMON TYPE

I Chronicles 22 gives us a typical fulfillment of this promise. David, as king, was allowed to gather workmen and materials for construction of the Temple, even though David himself was not permitted to have part in its actual building. David called for Solomon, charging him to build the house for the Lord. (vss. 6-11) Although David had planned to build

it himself, the Lord would not permit him to do so because he had been a man of war.

It was a work to be done by his son. Solomon was a type of yet another Son to come. David's advice to his son was: "Serve him [God] with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. ... Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it." (I Chron. 28:9,10) David adds: "The Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." (vs. 19) So David gave to his son Solomon, the pattern for constructing the Temple.

God arranged for various groups or classes of people he wanted to serve in the Temple after it had been built. The Temple was to be a picture or shadow of good things to come, foretelling the future fulfillment of God's promise of the coming kingdom. We read: "The courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with thee for all the service of the house of God: ... also the princes and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment."—I Chron. 28:21

This passage refers to those whom God prepares beforehand to administer his perfect law for man during his thousand-year kingdom. The scripture points to the Church; the Great Company; the Ancient Worthies; and finally to mankind themselves, the recipients of those blessings. Clearly this prophecy foreshadows the arrangement of good things to come in that blessed millennial kingdom of Christ.

When Solomon was finally seated upon his throne, David asked the Lord to give his son a perfect heart to keep God's commandments, testimonies, and statutes. He was also to build the palace for which he had made provision. All of these were typical of Jesus, the one who would sit on David's throne in God's kingdom. Paul's sermon at Antioch confirms this.

JESUS FULFILLS THE TYPE

Offering scriptural proof of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, Paul said: "He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee [brought you to birth]. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm,

Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.”—Acts 13:33-37

In the proclamation by the angel to Mary of Jesus’ birth, he said: “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.” (Luke 1:32) Psalm 132:11 assures us: “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.”

These promises are further confirmed in the wonderful and enlightening scriptures recorded by the Prophet Isaiah: “The government shall be upon his shoulder. ... Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”—Isa. 9:6,7

GOD’S COVENANT

The Abrahamic promise, which includes blessings for both the church and the world of mankind, promises a seed; and, in addition, blessings for all the families of the earth to come through that seed. Paul explains, ‘That seed is Christ.’ (Gal. 3:16) The promise of the blessings is sure, for it was sealed by God’s oath, which, knowing there is none greater, we never question. Likewise the covenant God made with David was firm, true, and real, and also included a promise of that same kingdom which will bless all of mankind. It, too, was sealed with God’s pledge of fulfillment. (Ps. 89:3) “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.”

Isaiah briefly describes how God’s covenant is to be carried out in his 1000-year kingdom. “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. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant

with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.”—Isa. 55:1-5

A similarly impressive picture of the kingdom is given in Revelation 22:1,17: “He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ... And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Clearly, the water of life in that glorious kingdom is to be made available for whoever desires it—all without money and without price. The time for receiving the water of life freely has not yet arrived. Those who seek eternal life now, must first count the cost. (Luke 14:28) They must take up their daily cross to follow Jesus. So our way is just like His way—one of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

THE CHURCH

We have already seen that the Church—in association with our Lord Jesus—is declared to be the Seed of Abraham. To carry out his work of restitution in the kingdom, God has commissioned the faithful Little Flock to bring his blessings to all mankind. (Gal. 3:29) Likewise, a related promise to the Church describes our inheritance to sit on the throne of David together with our Lord and Head, Jesus. It is: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3:21) What is more, both of God’s promises—those to Abraham and to David—are unconditional. God’s word is: ‘I am going to do this!’

Psalm 89 speaks *about* David; it is not written *by* him. It also refers to the blessings guaranteed by the sure mercies of David. Psalm 89:3,4 reads: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant.” Continuing, God pledges to David, “Thy seed [Christ] will I establish forever, and build up thy throne to all generations.”

Psalm 49:7 says that no man “can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” God reassures us in Psalm 89:20, however, that he has found a ransom, for he says: “I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.” David, here, typically

received the holy anointing oil, picturing Jesus' having been anointed with God's Holy Spirit when he came to earth to be our ransom sacrifice.

God, speaking under oath, said: "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven." (Ps. 89:34-37) God certifies that he will fulfill the promises that have gone forth out of his mouth.

THE LORD'S HOUSE

David, during his reign, was privileged to gather materials for construction of the Temple. These articles were all collected and prepared under conditions of strife, war, ridicule, humiliation, and confusion then existing; but the actual building was to be erected at a later date. In like manner, the living stones—the materials NOW being gathered during the stressful times of this Gospel Age—when assembled, will comprise God's true holy temple in his kingdom. First, however, there is a work to be done. These rough stones, having been quarried, must be chiseled, shaped, and all perfectly fitted for their respective positions in that heavenly temple before it is assembled. These are the very same 'living stones' Peter described as being built together, "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood," a habitation for God.—I Pet. 2:5

How beautifully this entire secret operation is described in the Old Testament. "The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (I Kings 6:7) Very soon, when all the living stones are perfected and made ready, in the midst of an ignorant and unmindful world, that glorious spiritual temple will be erected.

For some 2,000 years, these materials—Christ and all his brethren—have been in preparation to fill all the glorious spiritual positions in the house of God, that his name might be glorified. Truly, then, in his kingdom, all the world shall come to know our Lord, "from the least of them unto the greatest."—Jer. 31:34

Keeping that work in mind as our goal, let us strive to remain faithful that we might become part of that tabernacle of David, and share in the

work of blessing all the families of the earth in association with our Lord Jesus.

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Boldness of God's People

THE WORD 'BOLD' is found only once in the Old Testament Scriptures; namely, in Proverbs 28:1. The wise man says from personal experience, "The righteous are bold as a lion." This is an appropriate illustration, for a lion is a noble creature, with a complete absence of fear.

If God speaks in the Old Testament of boldness as one of the qualities possessed by his righteous people, we may be sure the same is true of those in the New Testament. Those who in this age have been drawn by the Father to Jesus as their Redeemer (John 6:44) and have consecrated themselves to him are justified through their faith in the ransom, and begetting of the Holy Spirit, and have become New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

OUR LORD'S EXAMPLE

All these must seek to possess the quality of boldness, prompting them to confess the Lord and his truth, by growing in this grace and attaining more and more of the character likeness of the Master. They must balance it with meekness and lowliness of heart, which were possessed in a superlative degree by Jesus. Jesus did not recklessly endanger his life as he sought to go forward in the work the Father had given him to do. He did not fail to take into consideration the dangers and difficulties of the way, but rested in full assurance of faith in the Father's wisdom and power. We also should follow the example of our Master in his faith in the many assurances given in the Law and the Prophets of his providential care over his faithful people. For example, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," should inspire us.—Ps. 34:7

Never at any time during the three and one-half years of his ministry did Jesus show the least sign of fear, or lack of confidence in what was written concerning him. His was a humble boldness in doing his Father's will, and in bringing to completion the work he had been given to do. We should not consider that there was a lack of boldness or courage when our Lord prayed in Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. 26:39) He knew that his course was very near

its end, and that he had but a few hours more to wait before the dreadful ordeal of crucifixion would be his experience.

It seems clear, however, that the ‘cup,’ or experience, from which Jesus prayed to be spared, was not his crucifixion, since he had come into the world to die for sin. He even had to experience the curse of the Law; for as Paul points out, crucifixion was a curse: “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”—Deut. 21:22,23; Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13

It has been suggested, with very good reason, that in the Gethsemane experience Jesus began to wonder whether his work of sacrifice had been perfectly performed. He knew that if he had come short, even in the smallest particular, he could not hope for a resurrection. The thought that he might never see his Father’s face again apparently was part of the cup he prayed might pass. This agonizing reverential fear and sense of the responsibility resting on him seemed more than he could bear. Hence Jesus prayed earnestly that he might be spared from enduring longer the sorrow and mental anguish he was then experiencing. The cross and uncertainty as to whether his work had been perfectly performed up to this time was on his mind. This going into death in uncertainty as to his future would then, it seems, be the cup from which Jesus prayed to be spared—‘let this cup pass from me.’

With reference to this, Hebrews 5:7, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*, reads: “He who in the days of his flesh, having offered up both prayers and supplications, crying aloud with tears to him who was able to deliver him out of death, and was heard for his devotion [or piety].” Here we are shown how the Father gave our Lord the assurance that up to this time all was well, and on receiving this assurance Jesus endured trustingly, and met his greatest and most crucial experience with humble boldness.

BOLDNESS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

This quality of boldness, or courage, begotten of faithful trust, is repeatedly shown in the New Testament records as one of the special characteristics of the Early Church, and especially of the disciples of the Master. They were given the privilege of continuing the work the Lord Jesus had begun. He said to them: “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”—John 20:21

In the accounts of the beginning of the great work of taking out “a people for his name” (Acts 15:14) to be the bride of Christ, we are

repeatedly told of the boldness of the early disciples manifested in their faithful proclamation of this great salvation. (Acts 4:19,20; 14:5-7; 18:24-26; 19:6-8) Note in the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul's earnest desire for more of this special spirit of the Master. He asks them to pray for him: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel."—Eph. 6:18,19

Paul does not intend to convey that this message which he delighted to proclaim with good courage was something very difficult to grasp and understand—a great 'mystery.' The Greek word translated 'mystery' means 'sacred secret.' It is kept secret or covered up for a time, and then is uncovered, made plain, and is therefore no longer a mystery. Hence important truths for a time are kept secret. When uncovered they are no longer mysteries, but simple and easy to understand.

As the Lord's people today well know, the mystery that Paul speaks of is that feature of the Gospel message which discloses that the Messiah, the Christ, as Jehovah's Anointed, is not a single individual, but a company of which Jesus is the Head. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, ... so also is Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) These are to bless all the families of the earth with salvation from sin and death.

BOLDNESS IN PROCLAIMING THE MESSAGE

Such a wonderful message should be proclaimed boldly to all who have an ear to hear! Paul, as a prisoner in Rome, wrote to his beloved brethren in Philippi along these lines. Years before he had preached the Word to them with such good results. (Acts 16:10-40) He told them how the same boldness, confidence and love of his truth had caused the Lord to bless his message to many in Rome. He writes, "My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace" ["throughout the whole pretorian guard," *Revised Standard Version*, from which regiment pairs of soldiers were taken who guarded Paul night and day], and in all other places; And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the Word without fear."—Phil. 1:13,14

Paul's faithfulness in proclaiming his Master's message whatever the consequences to himself, had inspired many of the brethren to similar

boldness and faithfulness. They were letting their light shine to the glory of their Master. In this way the Lord richly blessed the results of his efforts.

BOLDNESS IN PRAYER

The Scriptures exhort, “Let us . . . come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16) We note, therefore, that in addition to manifesting boldness in proclaiming the Lord’s message, we must be bold—full of humble confidence—to take advantage of all the means of grace including that which is here mentioned; namely, that there should be boldness in prayer.

It is possible that, at times, on account of weaknesses or failure, we might hesitate to draw near to the Lord to ask for forgiveness. We might even pray for grace that weaknesses might be overcome. And this is doubtless a condition into which the great Adversary, if possible, would endeavor to lead us. At such times, we need more than ever to go to the throne of grace to obtain mercy—the mercy provided in Christ whose merit will cleanse us from all sin, directly or indirectly resulting from the fall. (I John 1:7) As it is written, “He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit” even to the extent the New Creature has been loyal and faithful to all the principles of truth and righteousness.—Rom. 8:27

BOLDNESS IN THE LIVING WAY

Again Paul tells us that we should have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” (Heb. 10:19) *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* more correctly renders the passage: “Having, therefore, brethren, confidence respecting the entrance of the holies, by the blood of Jesus.”

Further, it is written: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.” (Heb. 10:22) We should, indeed, have full assurance of faith regarding the new and living way to life that has been opened up by our great High Priest, Jesus. It is not a way such as it was under the Law Covenant, which only brought condemnation, but a way made possible by him who “should taste death for every man,” and who has now appeared “in the presence of God for us,” and who “ever liveth to

make intercession” for us who are “in Christ Jesus.”—Heb. 2:9; 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:1

If at any time we feel we are failing to take advantage of the steps of grace, and the means of grace, by not coming with boldness, with confidence, to the throne of grace, we should remember that the Lord knows all about us, our weaknesses, our failures, better than we know them ourselves. “He knoweth our frame [to what extent we should be able to resist temptation]; he remembereth that we are dust.” (Ps. 103:14) We should remember too, that it was the humble publican rather than the self-confident Pharisee who was the more acceptable of the two.—Luke 18:10-14

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Finally, John speaks of having boldness in the day of judgment. He says, “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (I John 4:16,17) John’s mention of boldness in the day of judgment reminds us that the Gospel Age is the church’s day of judgment—the time when she is on trial for life. And it would be surely true to say that we could not pass our trial successfully, could not be pleasing to the Lord and enjoy his approval without confidence in his goodness, his love, and his power to assist and protect his people, and supply them with grace to help in every time of need.

If a child loves his father very much he has confidence in his kindly providences, and even in his disciplinary treatment. These are intended for his good. So, John indicates that if the love of God has been perfected in us, we shall have full confidence in the one who has placed us on trial for life, or, to have ‘boldness in the day of judgment.’

The Greek word here translated ‘boldness’ actually means ‘free utterance.’ This reminds us that utterance unhampered by fear is surely a desirable, almost necessary, requirement in our witnessing for the Lord. This will surely have the desired kind of influence upon those who hear, and who observe the way the witness is given. Note an illustration of this given in the account of an occurrence only a few days after Pentecost. The faithful and very forceful witness of the Master was still fresh in the minds of the Jewish leaders. “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they

marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13) And, we might surely add, ‘and learned of him.’ May we ever keep near to the Lord, and learn of him in respect to boldness and courage.

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