

The New Cruse

It's time for a New Cruse for a New Revival of New Testament Christianity. This magazine will be dedicated to such an end.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We are glad to be able to send forth the second issue of this new free magazine, *The New Cruse*. In this issue we are looking at the *Remnant*.

All through the ages when God's people started to corrupt the knowledge of His ways, will and Word, He preserved to Himself what He called a Remnant. This remnant was a group of genuine believers who stayed pure in their faith and lifestyle.

They were usually all that was left of the genuine after apostasy, compromise, disaster and judgement passed through the land. It was in an hour of great darkness and oppression that God's Remnant stood forth, separate from corruption.

The Lord has only ever had one of two things in the earth, a Remnant or a Revival.

After the Revival fades and disappears; after the tide goes out; all that is left is a scattered Remnant.

At this stage they are not much to look at, but out of this scattered Remnant God always calls His people back to His Divine original pattern as laid out in Scripture. This Remnant is then moulded into a vessel and prepared for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

The Remnant becomes a great host as revival comes again and remains such until compromise and declension sets in again. This is the glorious and also sad history of the ebb and flow of the Remnant and Revival.

This issue of *The New Cruse* is being sent forth to God's Remnant who will not bow the knee to compromise, false doctrine and false prophets; to those who are grieved and burdened for God's glory and God's Church in this hour; to those who are now being prepared to return once more to God's ways and to a fresh move of the Holy Spirit in the earth.

May the Lord inspire, encourage, en-vision and strengthen you as you read. God Bless you.

Yours in Christ Jesus,
Keith Malcomson
May 2009

THE NAZARITE REMNANT

By Keith Malcomson

"For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." Jdg.13v5

The Remnant

The term Remnant is found constantly in scripture, especially in the Old Testament but also in the New. It means *to be left over, remain, leave, be left behind, and the remainder*.

Those who survived great tragedies of God's judgment in Israel were called *The Remnant*. When terrible apostasy - a falling away from Truth - swept through Israel and they turned to other gods, or changed the character of the true God into something false, those that resisted such apostasy and remained steadfast were called *The Remnant*.

Again when God allowed an invading army such as Assyria to invade Israel and to take the city of Jerusalem into captivity and to carry off the people as slaves and servants into a foreign land, those that were left as well as those in captivity were called a *Remnant*.

If you go to a tailor's shop you would find many remnants of material. These are the leftovers of the original garments. There may have once been a beautiful dress in that shop, but it is gone and all that is left is a strip of material. It might certainly be the same colour and kind of material as the finished garment but it does not have the beauty, shape and glory of the full garment. Very often this is how Israel was left.

Comparing the glory and size of the kingdom under the reign of David or Solomon to later times when the enemy had overrun the land, breached the walls of Jerusalem and carried away most of the people, makes a very sad comparison.

When we look at the glory of that early church in Jerusalem in the Book of Acts as well as how the church has looked at certain times in church history and compare it to most of what we have today, especially in the western world, we clearly see that all we presently have is a remnant - the leftovers of the real.

At points in time there have been many Remnants—Enoch, David (in the midst of Saul's Army), Gideon, Esther, Nehemiah, Moses (calling for the deliverance of the people), Joshua and Caleb, Jeremiah, Daniel etc. Although this shows a general failure amongst God's people these Remnants shone forth glorious in their age and generation.

The Nazarites

In ancient Israel there were various revival movements which were God's reaction against apostasy and his answer to the situation in returning to Him. God raised up such movements like the *Prophets*, the *Levites* and the *Nazarites* for such a task. In this article we want to deal with these Nazarites. Who were the Nazarites?

In Numbers Chapter 6 we are given the Law or Vow of a Nazarite which is three-fold:

1. *"He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink..."* (v3)

The symbolism of drink, alcohol, of wine and strong drink and of all fruit of the vine speaks of influence. When it says that the Nazarite took a vow upon him to separate himself unto God he was saying 'I am not going to allow any influence but that of the Holy Ghost upon my life.' It says in Ephesians 5:18 *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the spirit."* On the day of Pentecost it says that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and a little later that some of the people began to mock them saying they were filled with new wine; in other words they were under a strong influence.

2. *All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head... in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow."* (v5)

In Scripture it was a mark of shame and reproach for a man to grow long hair. Do you know what we have lost in the church in this hour? We have lost that reproach for being different by separation unto God through the cross. This open shame was a public testimony of consecration to all.

3. *All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body."* (v6)

The third thing is that he is to touch no dead thing throughout the time of his consecration. Even if a family member dies he is not to go or he will become unclean. What a sacrifice, what a setting aside unto God. God was saying that anything dead will pollute. We as the church ought not to touch those things that bring death to our walk with God.

Things of this world will bring death to your soul; will breed death in your prayer life and death to your consecration. Things which you watch, you speak, you hear; you know what things bring death to your spiritual life but the Nazarite remnant says "We shall not touch any dead thing. No death is going to touch us. I have been born for a life of consecration. I am going to walk in the life of God. I want a flowing of the River of life of God." Consecration is the place of True Life.

These three principles governed the life of the Nazarites. Why did people take this vow? In v1 we are told that it was in order to *"separate themselves unto the LORD:"* It was for those hungry for God, those who desired His presence, fellowship, communion and blessing.

Nazarites always dealt with recovery, restoration and revival. For those who desired these, the call to consecration was the means.

Joseph- Restoration of God's purpose

If we study carefully we will find that this vow of the Nazarite began back in the life of Joseph. He was the first Nazarite. In his life we see the recovery of God's purpose. Interestingly, we will find in this study that each mother of a Nazarite son was originally barren in womb.

The response of Rachel, Jacob's wife, to her barrenness was to cry out first to her husband then unto God, *"Give me children else I die."* She started to cry unto God, 'Give me children or I die. I must have a man child I must bring forth the life of God; I want to fulfil the purpose of God for my life.'

Rachel, as with all the mothers of Nazarites, is a picture of the Church. Somebody will always have to *pray a price* and pay a price. God heard and answered Rachel's prayers and opened her womb miraculously and so Joseph was born. She conceived a second time and bore Benjamin but as a result of his birth she died. Rachel paid the ultimate price for answered prayer. In his birth she died. It cost her something in the bringing forth of the answer to that prayer. Likewise with us, it is going to cut deep into our hearts and cost us even our very life.

Joseph was a Nazarite. We are told twice in the Old Testament that Joseph was *"separate from his brethren."* This word "separate" spoken of him is the same word used for a Nazarite. It says that he was *nazar* or *Nazarite* or separated from his brethren. This is the first mention of a Nazarite in the whole Bible and it refers to Joseph. God is going to use him to recover the purpose of God. That is the whole testimony of this first Nazarite.

I believe that Joseph's separation, consecration and holiness so impacted God's people that he started a trend for all those following who desired God and hated evil amongst God's people. Moses later lifted his pen to inscribe the vow of a Nazarite, not as a new invention or revelation but simply to regulate the practice which was in operation from the days of Joseph. If any man wanted to separate himself unto the living God this is how he would do it.

Amidst his backslidden brethren filled with jealousy, hatred, anger and all the manifestations of the flesh he was set apart to restore God's purpose. What is to happen to a man who longs for a recovery of God's purpose in the earth? This Nazarite must be proved. His dreams, his desires, his motives, his character must all be tried by fire.

And so we read of his Brother's hatred towards him which increased daily. This began because of his consecration and separation not because of his dream; his dream only made them hate him more. His brethren envied him, conspired against him, cast him into a pit and sold him into slavery.

We know well that Joseph went through years of trial and troubles until iron entered his soul in order to see a recovery of God's purpose. When he came out the other end he was ready and prepared to feed the nations and to see the purpose of God fulfilled. He was sent ahead by God to see them all recovered.

At the point of almost total loss, ruin and destruction of God's people, the purpose of God is revealed. Only then do they see that all things had been working together for good all along. When old Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph sent we are told that *"the spirit of Jacob their father revived."* He brought revival to God's Remnant people.

In old age before Joseph died in Egypt he left a promise for the people of God. *“God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”* They would have to suffer terrible oppression in the land of captivity (like Joseph did) but God would send a revival to them, deliver them and restore His purpose amongst them.

Samson- Restoration of the work of God

The next Nazarite we read of mentioned by name is Samson. His life speaks of a restoration of the work of God in Israel in a dark hour. The work of God was at low ebb, it had come to a standstill. There was no revival. There had been no moving of the Spirit of God for 40 years. No deliverance or deliverer. At such a time God raises up a Nazarite.

Again we see that Samson’s mother was barren. We do not even know her name. She is just called Manoah’s wife. There is little or nothing of any worth mentioned about her, but what was special was that the Lord visited her and she conceived. The Angel of the Lord came to her and called her to separation and consecration to the bringing forth of a Nazarite who would restore God’s work by delivering His people from the Philistines. This was a sovereign visitation of God; He chose her and He visited her. Revivals are sovereign.

Samson took upon himself the reproach, he did not touch wine, and he started to serve the living God. As he grew the Spirit of God moved upon him as the only influence and began to move him mightily in restoring God’s work. Samson did smite the enemy in the land.

At first he demonstrated his consecration but sadly he then played with his consecration. He broke his vow and lost his consecration, his vision and his strength. He became weak like other men.

But there was a recovery; there was a coming back by the mercy and the grace of God. You may have lost your consecration or you may have blemished it by whatever means. Things may have flooded in upon you and gripped you and held you. Even now they may seem to bind you, but there is a way back.

Provision was made in the vow of a Nazarite for anyone who polluted themselves to return to a place of consecration. Just consecrate yourself afresh; begin to grow that hair anew. Through the blood of the Lamb all sin is washed away.

This is one of the greatest revelations and foundations of a Christian’s life. You can get up tomorrow morning afresh coming to the blood of Jesus Christ, to the blood of sprinkling and say ‘Oh God, wash me afresh.’ None of your transgressions will be remembered; all of your sins will be blotted out. Not just covered, not covered temporarily, every sin nailed to the cross, every sin removed, every blemish upon my conscience, every blemish upon my walk removed. I can stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ redeemed by the precious blood, ready to give myself afresh, ready to walk with him afresh.

Hear me now, if you have blemished your conscience, if you have blemished your consecration, meet with Him afresh right now. Do not leave this day with a stain upon your conscience, a stain upon your mind. Do not give the devil room. Come to the blood of sprinkling. There is a fount open in the house of God that is flowing.

This is the very foundation of consecration.

Finally Samson’s consecration was restored and revived when he began to pray earnestly – this meant trouble for the Philistines. In his death more Philistines were killed than in all his life - three thousand in number. It was another Pentecost. In Samson’s death God’s work was restored.

Samuel- Restoration of the character of God

We are told clearly that it was the Lord that closed Hannah’s womb; another barren wife. The Lord closed her womb so that she could have no children. It is normal for a woman to bare children in a marriage but here was a barren womb, her womb was closed up.

Do you know that this affliction birthed forth a cry from Hannah which profoundly affected a nation? She was a little unknown woman but because of her praying and travailing before God a nation was affected. God raised up a Nazarite; a prophet in the nation.

Do not think that God will spare you in the bringing forth of his purpose. Do not think that the Lord will spare you suffering grief of heart, sorrow or anguish in the things that you see or hear.

Hannah could have said to herself ‘be content and satisfied there is no visitation of God. There is no coming of God to answer my prayer.’

She enters into the House of God in this state and starts praying and travailing in such a way that words did not even come out of her mouth. She was so burdened in longing for life and reality. In her prayer she promised that if she be given her request she would raise him as a Nazarite. In all this there was an influence of the Holy Ghost upon her.

Old Eli thought she was drunk. Eli was a good man but not walking with the Lord as he ought to have been. A good man but affected and influenced by his children. A good man but affected by the desires and longings of his old age. A good man but he didn’t rectify the errant ministry or restore righteousness to the pulpit again. A good man but he did not show them a way back to recovery.

He kept himself but he did not keep his family. He kept himself but he did not keep the house of God. He preserved himself from sin yet he let sin engulf his home and God’s House. We must be much more than that saints of God if we are to really see a true recovery.

When Hannah went into God’s house to travail and pray there was a reproach upon her, she was mocked and scorned but she was determined to touch God no matter what. No one was going to deter her from seeking the face of God.

In due course Samuel was born and as a Nazarite God’s plan was to restore the character of God through him. His mother, as promised, gave the boy to serve in the house of God. While young he saw corruption in the House of God, he saw the compromise in Eli, he saw the wickedness of his sons and his young heart burned within him. Even though corruption surrounded him, he was the one who was going to point the way back again. He would say to them there is a righteous walk with God, there is a way of holiness and righteousness.

At the end of his long years of ministry he stood before all of Israel and asked ‘Can anyone condemn me, can anyone accuse

me that I served Israel for money or that I had any wrong motives or that I stole from you or that I lied to any man?"

In our nations and in the church, character needs to be restored. We need people who are faithful, people who are praying, people who are holy, a people who are true.

Many Christians within the church do not know how to believe any more. They've been so abused, they have been told so many lies, they have seen such a twisting and a corrupting of ministry and of the church that they no longer can trust. Leadership has cut them, hurt them, abused them and used them.

Straight across the body of Christ this has happened. It is a disease, a disaster. Most sheep are not looking for the spectacular; they are just looking for reality.

Today are you honest? Are you upright? Are you faithful? Are you fit to restore the character of God and for God to use you to say there is still Christ-likeness in the body?

True ministers of the Gospel in this hour can say, 'We are not after any man's gold, we are not after the fame of man, we are not after the exalting of our name, we are just seeking the glory and the honour and the righteousness of God.'

It is an hour in which we must recover the character of God. The enemy has worked and man's hand has worked in the greatest of churches, but it is now the time for the testimony of God's character to be recovered.

John the Baptist-Restoration of the Word of God

In Luke chapter 1 we read that Zacharias was serving in the priesthood in the Temple. He was offering up the fragrance which is a picture of prayer. He was praying and we know what he was beseeching God for because the angel came forth to answer his prayer, and to tell him that his prayers were answered.

By tradition there was a certain set reading each day of the Scripture in the Temple and Synagogues. Each day of the year the priest would go in and open up the Word of God and read it. On this specific day according to custom, Numbers chapter 6 the vow of the Nazarite and Judges 13 concerning the birth of Samson, were read.

Can you just see old Zacharias reading and hearing the Word of God and saying 'Oh God, give us a Nazarite in the streets of Jerusalem again. Jerusalem has become barren and dark and corrupt. They have taken the Word of God and have made it something else. They have twisted it, they have hid it, and they have taken away the key of life and cast it aside. They have made the way unto you hard to find, the reality and the glory is gone it's gone.'

I am sure he started to pray like this: 'Give us a Nazarite Remnant again that will rise up and dedicate themselves wholly unto you. And restore and recover the testimony of God again. Give us a remnant that will bring back the Word of God to the people.'

Do you know what God did when God heard his prayer? He sent an angel to bring the answer "...thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John...For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the

children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And so John was born. Remember that he was born to an old couple. This was impossible. Elisabeth was barren, so was Zacharias. But the key was that they were a devout couple who desired God's Word to go forth again in the land in power. We need this testimony in our homes again if we are to raise up a prophet in the land.

John the Baptist was born to recover and restore the testimony of God's Word, its message, its purity and its power.

In those days the Sadducees and the Pharisees prospered. The Sadducees disbelieved the Word of God. They poured utter disbelief upon the Word. They changed it and said it does not mean what it says. The Pharisees argued and debated over it. They came forth with their long gowns, their long prayers, their eloquent sermons, their long titles, but the hypocrisy, the blemish that had spread across Israel and Jerusalem was terrible.

So many priests read the Word of God in the synagogue every week and so many people heard but without effect because of manmade traditions. They were 400 years without a prophet.

Where was the Word of God? Who had a word from the throne of God? Who was burning with the truth of God? Who had fire shut up in his bones? The righteous must have asked this. They must have said 'Give us someone burning on fire again. They might lack many things but give us a Nazarite Remnant.'

You know what God did with this young John? He took him out of the synagogue into the wilderness in order that he might grow into a prepared vessel. We read often of his growth. The wilderness for him meant years of growing into maturity and strength. It meant preparation and deep heart dealings in order to be made ready. A testimony does not come in one year. A ministry does not come in one year. It means years of isolation. It was in this wilderness that the Word of the Lord also came to him.

And so that man, John the Baptist, stood on the banks of Jordan and started to preach and proclaim "*behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.*" He said "*behold he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and fire.*" We are taught that his ministry was to make ready a people, to prepare the people and make them ready for the coming of the Lord.

That pure unadulterated, fiery, Holy Ghost anointed message caused him to lose his head and life, but praise God, a people were quickly prepared after centuries of waiting.

Finally

The Nazarites are God's emergency people whom He raises up to recover His testimony, His purpose, His character and His Word.

May God hear our cry in this hour and give us a Nazarite Remnant before the Lord's coming. He is coming suddenly to judge the nations of this world and He will pour out his wrath. There is great tragedy coming on the nations of the world and judgements that we cannot even fathom. There will be a

generation that sees the fullness of the judgement of God. The cup of iniquity is almost full and the day of the mercy is coming to an end. The day of God's salvation and the preaching of this gospel shall suddenly come to an end. While we are yet here, while it is yet day, we are to Labour. I do believe it is time for a Nazarite Remnant under no influence but the Holy Ghost, to preach the Word of God again.

Separate yourselves, consecrate yourselves that the living God might do wonders and miracles amongst you; wonders that would amaze your eyes; wonders that would cause you to stand in awe of the salvation of your God, of the power of that blood. Our God has not finished until we are out of here, let's reach out and touch him, let there be a witness in the land again, the testimony of a people given over to Him. Let the nations have a Nazarite again that will walk the streets of the cities saying that there is a way back, there is a message to recover, and there is a character of the living God to restore. Let the Spirit of God work within you in this hour.

THE JOSEPH COMPANY

By David Wilkerson

I know of one Bible scholar who has discovered more than a hundred ways in which Joseph was a type of Jesus Christ. Yet, as much as I believe Joseph was a type of Christ, I also believe He was a type of last-day remnant - a people whom God is raising up right now to show His church how to break out of its spiritual famine!

Let me show you the Joseph Company - a small body of last-day believers wholly given to the Lord. They commune with God daily. They are led by the Spirit in every detail of their lives. And at this moment they are coming out of great trials and testing to enter a place of revelation, wisdom and fruitfulness. God is working in them, giving them His truth and knowledge. And the time is coming soon when He is going to call upon them as He did Joseph!

Right now, the church of Jesus Christ is growing increasingly worldly, sensual, wicked and cold. Our ministry receives literally thousands of letters from pastors and laypeople who are burdened down by the condition of their church. People complain that they don't hear convicting, life-changing sermons. Pastors complain that few want to hear the truth.

Yes, there are some powerful "lamp-stick" churches in America - full of light and glory and the holiness of God. The pastors are on fire, preaching righteousness and God is moving mightily among the people.

But for the most part the church today is experiencing widespread spiritual famine: shallow sermons, dead hearers, "lively" worship that is not backed up by righteous living. A Laodicean blindness has fallen like a cloud over the eyes of multitudes who once were on fire for God. Many true ministers of God are becoming disheartened. One pastor wrote recently:

"A great number of godly pastors are being fired or forced out by their churches. I resigned my church last December 31. A colleague just ten miles away also left his church under a cloud. A third pastor sixty miles away submitted his resignation under duress; a fourth was fired by his church in October...."

"In my region, churches are not growing by making new converts, but from Christians moving around, shopping with a consumer mentality. It's a revolving door.... Please find out for yourself how many men of God are heartbroken, defeated, discouraged - yet also saying, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus'!"

What Is God's Solution to Such Backsliding and Famine?

God has always been at work far in advance of every spiritual famine in His church. In every generation He has moved ahead to prepare a way out for His people!

The seventy-five members of Jacob's clan would have died in the great worldwide famine (and the promise of Israel would have been destroyed) had not God been working ahead of it all. In fact, some twenty years before the famine hit, God was already setting in motion a plan to save His people from destruction.

He sent Joseph ahead to Egypt! For twenty years God worked on this man - isolating him, trying him, preparing him for a place of authority - because Joseph was to become the life-saver of God's chosen, He kept Joseph from the limelight - to be disciplined for a coming day of chaos and death!

Beloved, just as surely as God isolated Joseph, He has a Joseph Company today that is hidden from all eyes. These are in the furnace of affliction, prisons of testing, battlegrounds of trials and temptation; they are dying to this world, wanting nothing of its fame, honour, money or pleasure. And they are growing hungry to become more intimate with Christ - to know His heart and His voice.

You may not understand all the mysterious testing's, trials and troubles in your life. But if your heart is fully set on following Christ, you can rest assured God has purpose in it all: He wants to bring you into His Joseph Company!

There are three things that went into the making of Joseph as a tried and tested servant. And you too will experience these things if you are a part of this last-day company:

1. Joseph Responded to the Spirit's Call to a Holy, Separated Life.

God's Spirit has always been calling mankind to Himself - to holiness, purity of heart and a separated life. Tragically, few ever respond - but in every generation God has a small remnant who does answer His call. They separate themselves, purify their lives and give themselves wholly to Him.

Joseph responded to God's call at a very early age. And he had ten older brothers who received the same call to surrender, walk righteously and separate themselves. But they chose to remain in the world - and their walk with God was half-hearted.

There were at least two occasions when all of Jacob's sons received the Spirit's call very clearly. The first was at Shalem, in Shechem, where Jacob built an altar to THE GOD OF ISRAEL. Jacob called his sons to the altar to become worshipers with him - to kneel before the Lord and follow Him wholeheartedly.

But Joseph's brothers instead turned to revenge and bloodshed. When a Shechemite defiled their sister Dinah, they rushed into the city, burning it down and killing every man, woman and child (see Genesis 34). These ten brothers hadn't given

themselves wholly to trust and serve God. No - their violence made Jacob a stench among the Canaanites!

Yet God called out to them clearly once more, this time at Bethel. Jacob knew his sons were bound with idolatry and were rejecting God's call to purity and righteousness. So he warned them: *"Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God"* (Genesis 35:2-3).

Beloved, this is one of the clearest calls in all of God's Word! The phrase "change your garments" in Hebrew means a moral and spiritual purification of the mind and heart. Outwardly, Jacob's sons surrendered: *"And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand and all their earrings"* (verse 4). But their repentance was only on the surface - they never had a true heart-change. They went right back to their rebellion, becoming full of hate, envy and strife!

Yet there was something different about Joseph: his repentance had been from the heart. He had responded to the Spirit's call - and from the age of seventeen, he was wholly set on following the Lord. In the midst of a wicked, evil environment, Joseph maintained clean hands and a pure heart.

Now, Jacob had other sons who were born to Bilhah and Zilpah, his maid and concubine. These sons cared for the family flocks, and Joseph was sent out to the fields to work among them, but he was soon grieved - because his brothers spoke and lived like heathen! His pure heart was crushed by the wickedness in his own family.

"And Joseph brought unto his father their evil report" (37v2), Joseph unburdened his heart to his father: *"You wouldn't believe the way they live, Father. They speak against your God and mine. They're grieving Him!"*

Beloved, this is a mark of the Joseph Company: they have a grief for sin! They have forsaken all idols and are in love with Jesus - their hearts are aflame with His holiness! They see the sin in the land, but they are grieved most of all by the sin in the church. They cry out from their souls, *"Oh, Father - look at what is happening among Your children!"*

If you are a part of this last-day company, you can't overlook sin. Rather, something has to rise up in you that says, *"Oh God, I can't stand what they're doing to Your name!"* You begin to pray - not against people, but against the inroads of demonic powers into the church of Jesus Christ!

Joseph's Father Favoured Him, Clothing Him With a Special Garment That Made Him Stand Out Among His Brethren!

Does our heavenly Father favour certain of His children? Or doesn't the Bible say God is no respecter of persons?

When it comes to eternal salvation and His wonderful covenant promises, God treats all alike. But God also responds to all who respond wholeheartedly to His calling. He puts His special favour on those who yield their lives to Him entirely!

Job said: *"Thou hast granted me life and favour"* (Job 10v12). And David said: *"For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield"* (Ps.5v12). *"Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong"* (30v7). Scripture also tells us: *"And the child*

Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men" (1 Sam.2v26).

The fact is our heavenly Father puts a special garment on those who seek after Him and give Him their heart completely: *"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness"* (Isa.61v10).

Joseph responded to the Spirit's call, surrendering all - and he received favour from his father. He was given a robe that set him apart. But that favour of his father was costly! It cost Joseph every relationship. It brought him rejection, misunderstanding, mockery: *"All his brethren... hated him"* (Gen.37v4).

Why did Joseph's brothers turn on him? The key is in verse 11: *"His brethren envied him."* When they saw the robe Joseph wore, they knew it spoke of favour, righteousness. And they hated it - because it reminded them of the Spirit's call they had rejected! Joseph was a reproach to their half-hearted lifestyle!

You see, Joseph's brothers sat around trading in petty gossip and self-centred talk. Their hearts were occupied with land, possessions, their future, But Joseph's was elsewhere. He spoke of the things of God, of supernatural dealings. God had given him dreams, which in that day was synonymous with hearing the voice of God.

Yes, Joseph was of a different cloth - and that difference made him hated and envied among his brothers. And beloved, the same thing will happen to you if you have sold out to Jesus!

Lukewarm believers around you will want to talk about their cars, houses and jobs - but you'd rather talk about eternal things, about what God is saying to you. Soon you'll become a reproach to their half-heartedness. They'll envy you - because you represent the call of the Holy Ghost they turned down!

Indeed, those of the Joseph Company remnant know all about rejection. They know the pain of being tagged a fanatic, a spiritual kook, an "unbalanced" believer. Even preachers mock them, calling their separation and devotion to Jesus "spiritual pride." They tell their congregation, *"This one is too far out. God does not expect such fanaticism!"*

2. Joseph's Greatest Trial was the Word of God He So Loved and Trusted!

"He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him" (Ps.105v17, 19). Joseph was tested and tried in many ways - but his greatest trial was the word he had received!

Consider everything Joseph endured: At only seventeen, he was stripped down and cast into a pit to starve to death. His cold-hearted brothers laughed at his pleas for mercy. He was sold to Ishmaelite traders, taken by caravan to an Egyptian slave market and then sold as a common slave.

Yet Joseph's greatest trial wasn't his rejection by his brothers. It wasn't the human indignity of being made into a slave or being cast into prison. No - Joseph was confused and tried in spirit by the clear word he had heard from God!

God had revealed to Joseph through dreams that he would be given great authority, and that he would use it for God's glory. His brothers would bow before him - even the sun, moon and stars would bow! He would be a great deliverer of many people.

Yet I believe none of this was an ego trip for Joseph. His heart was so set on God that this word instead gave him a humble sense of destiny: "Lord, You have put Your hand on me to have a part in Your great, eternal plan. Oh God - why choose me?" Joseph was blessed just by knowing he would play an important role in bringing God's will to pass!

But all the circumstances in Joseph's life were just the opposite of what God had put in his heart. He was the servant - he had to bow! How could he hold to such a word from God, that he would one day deliver multitudes, when he was a slave himself? He must have thought, "This doesn't make sense. How could God be 'ordering my steps' into prison - into oblivion? He said I was going to be blessed. He didn't tell me this was going to happen!"

For ten years Joseph served in Potiphar's house faithfully - but in the end he was misjudged and lied about. His victory over temptation with Potiphar's wife only landed him in jail. During such times he must have pondered the awful questions: "Did I hear correctly? Or did my pride invent these dreams? Could my brothers have been right - that I'm too given over to this word? Maybe all these things are happening to me as discipline for some kind of selfish desire...."

Beloved, there have been times when God has shown me things He has wanted for me - ministry, service, usefulness - yet my every circumstance was the very opposite of that word. At such times I thought, "Oh God, this can't be You speaking - it has to be my flesh," I was being tried by God's word to me!

I know a dear pastor who is being tried by God's Word. He believes what the Bible says about healing - yet, for the past five years he has watched his wife deteriorate with a rare disease. He prays for the sick at his church - and then he comes home to feed, dress and bathe his wife. He believes God for her healing, yet she grows worse every day.

Yet I see revealed in this man the grace and patience of Christ. He is one of the most loving, caring men of God I have ever met; the tenderness he shows his wife now comes out in his ministry to his congregation!

A dear sister wrote recently that over a year ago she finally determined to go all the way with Jesus. God began to reveal Christ in her - yet soon afterward, she discovered her husband was seeing prostitutes. He was staying out every night in bars and brothels.

This woman was forced to leave her home and get a job to support her three children. The more devoted she became to Christ, the more her husband turned away from God. She couldn't understand why, when she set her heart on Christ, such an awful tragedy would happen. But I sensed in her letter a power, a heavenly strength.

She too is being tried by the Word! God has given her His promises - yet her circumstances are the exact opposite!

Even in the Midst of Every Trial and Hard Place, God Prospers His Joseph Company!

Even while Joseph was a servant in Potiphar's house, he was blessed by God. And soon after he landed in prison, he prospered there as well. How did God prosper him? It wasn't with money or possessions; it wasn't with position. No - all along God was prospering Joseph's spirit - speaking to his heart, giving him dreams and interpretations!

This is what kept Joseph going on with God. He had faith that, in spite of all his hardships and situations beyond his control, God was with him. Joseph was never for a moment without the manifest presence of the Lord - and that constant, abiding presence produced a peace within him.

I believe God must have longed to show Joseph the end of the story - to whisper to him, "Don't worry, Joseph. This is how it's going to end...." But He dared not - because Joseph was still in school!

You see, Joseph didn't know that one day he was going to "teach (Pharaoh's) senators wisdom" (Ps.105v22). Yet how could he teach God's wisdom to Egypt's leaders unless he first had learned it himself? God's children learn such lessons only by faith! We get God's wisdom through trials, tribulations, hardships and testing's. We don't pray it down - we live it out!

If you are in God's last-day Joseph Company, then you are learning to lean on Him in your trials. You're learning to trust and not complain - to rest in Him completely. You may not comprehend all the mysterious ways God has led you. In fact, everything around you may seem the very opposite of the word God has given you.

But you're learning that in all things, Christ is your resource. And God is keeping you in school for the day when He will call on you!

3. The Day Came When It All Made Sense to Joseph! God Brought Everything Together - And Every Word and Promise Was Fulfilled to The Letter!

I believe it happened during Joseph's darkest hour - when he was lonely, downcast, about to give up his dreams, questioning his place in God. Suddenly, the call came from one of the king's guards: "Joseph! Get cleaned up - Pharaoh is calling for you!"

In that moment, the Spirit of God must have come upon Joseph mightily. I believe his heart leapt - an excitement grew within him: he was about to understand what it was all about!

As Joseph shaved and trimmed his hair, he probably thought, "This is the beginning of what God promised me. Now I know I heard from Him! The devil was not in control - my life hasn't been wasted. God has been directing everything the entire time!"

In a matter of minutes, Joseph was standing before Pharaoh, listening to his dream. He gave the interpretation of the coming famine and told Pharaoh he had to gather and store the nation's grain: "Someone must be in charge of the storehouses. You have to find a man who's full of wisdom to oversee it all!" (Genesis 41).

Pharaoh looked around - and then he turned to Joseph: "You, Joseph! I appoint you second ruler. Only I will have more power in the kingdom than you. You will oversee it all!" How quickly things had changed! Within an hour, Joseph had gone from being a forsaken, unknown prisoner to the second

most powerful man in Egypt. As he rode a royal chariot through the streets, the people were bowing before him - and suddenly he realized, his dream, was being lived out!

I can just see Joseph riding along in deep but joyful contemplation. He must have relived every hard time of the past twenty years. He thought of all the trials and tests - of his brothers' rejection, and of being sold by them into slavery.

But now a joy came into his heart - because everything was coming together! He said, "Now I can see it! A famine is coming - and God wants to save my father and my brothers. He sent me ahead of them. This was His plan all along!" The day came when Joseph stood before his brothers and was able to say: "*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive*" (Genesis 50:20).

"God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (45:7-8).

Joseph was saying, "God was behind this, every step of the way! Every hardship the devil brought upon me - even the harm you meant to do to me - God turned to good and made a part of His eternal plan!"

Dear saint, if you are a part of this Joseph Company, very soon you're going to understand your present fiery trials. God is going to bring you into the promise He gave you - and suddenly it's all going to make sense. You'll see that He has never forsaken you. He had to take you this way - for He has been training you, preparing you, teaching you to trust Him for everything. He has planned a time for you to be used - and that time is just ahead!

The Last-Day Evangelists Will Not Be Primarily in Pulpits: They Will Be in the Congregation - Avoiding Attention, but Mightily Used!

A time is coming soon when there will be a spiritual famine such as the world has never seen. People are going to be starving spiritually on all sides. Yet the broken and famine-stricken will be taken one by one and told, "Come with me - I know someone full of Jesus. They've been tested, they've been through the fire, and they're full of the Holy Spirit. They will have a true word of deliverance for you!"

Beloved, already I see this happening! I know a number of the Joseph Company by name, because I've talked to them. They are able to give out the Bread of Life to the starving - because they have the keys to God's storehouse! They know the ways of the Lord, because they have come through their tests and trials with a grip on God. Something powerful is being revealed in them - and that is a heart fully persuaded that God answers, prayer!

How are you responding to God's mysterious dealings with you? Are you fully persuaded that God is at work in all things, fulfilling His promises to you? Can you say, "It's enough right now that I know Jesus is with me - and He's prospering my spirit"?

Hold on in faith! Don't be afraid - because you are in Christ's school. Everything is under His control. Suddenly the hour will come when your battle will end and your victory will be

made real. You'll come out of the fire a vessel of honour - to do His will as part of the Joseph Company!

THE HOLY SEED
By Pastor Peter Bond
Lighthouse Christian Fellowship

Isaiah 6

Recently, we stood round the Communion table and sang that lovely chorus, 'I see the Lord ... He is high and lifted up, and His train fills the temple'.

Isaiah, in the 6th chapter of his prophecy, actually saw Him. So awesome was the sight that the prophet was immediately struck by a keen sense of His own unworthiness. It drew from the depths of his heart that memorable cry, '*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips*' (Is.6:5). Following the Lord's gracious cleansing by fire of his prophet, the invitation to service is given to which Isaiah responds by saying, '*Here am I; send me*'. (vs. 8).

We often refer to Jesus' words at the close of the first two gospels as 'the great commission': but who can comprehend the magnitude of the commission the Lord lays upon this prophet! Like Noah before the flood, he is to preach to a people hard of heart, blind, and dull of hearing: he is to preach on faithfully and persistently even though divine judgment is determined upon this people; they are to be removed, carried into captivity as a consequence of their chronic rebellion and idolatry. (vs. 9-12). I believe the faithful preacher in our day must prepare himself to face conditions similar to these if he is to remain as a faithful servant of God.

We see on every hand in the British Isles the evidence of such a bondage. A people, once so signally blessed of the Lord with gospel liberty continuing over centuries, and even into our present day, has determinedly turned its back on Jesus Christ, rejecting the things of God; and becoming self-satisfied, materialistic, deaf to the appeal of Calvary's love, blind to the light of God's truth; preferring to give its allegiance (and credence) to the theories of evolution and the big bang!

In the professing church at large we can observe the fulfilment of Paul's prophecy in (II Tim. 4:3-4): '*For the time will come when they (the people of God) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables*'. We understand from Jesus' own teaching in (Jn.8:31&32) that the pathway of freedom is only by knowledge of the truth, and that this knowledge cannot be had except by the obedience of faith. For Christians to resolutely '*turn away their ears from the truth*' is to embark upon a state of spiritual captivity and bondage to the persuasions of men in which they are '*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine*' (Eph 4:14). Whether that 'wind' blows from Toronto, Brownsville, Pensacola or Lakeland, Florida, we are tragically witnessing thousands who are being swept along by its gale force of false claims and manifestations mixed in with foolishness, and compounded by manifest ungodliness of character in those who are in the forefront of these so-called 'moves of the spirit'!

Happily, when confronted with these monstrous perversions, we can take our own stand and find a place of rest in the truth of (Is.6:13). Look at that powerful verse with me just for a moment. What is God saying through it to the church of this present time? Simply this:

- (i) Somewhere, mixed up in that captivity is a remnant, a surviving portion, what the prophet calls here *'a tenth'*;
- (ii) That remnant, that *'tenth'* is going to be turned back to the ways of truth and righteousness; the promise of God is, *'and it shall return'* ;
- (iii) It is going to regain a right standing with God, *'accepted in the beloved'*, as once again its worship, witness and service return to biblical patterns. It *'shall be eaten'* (not *'devoured'*!) Eating here is symbolic of a total acceptance. In the same way, when we eat, we consent to accept something intimately into our physical bodies, so the Lord will accept that remnant people into His spiritual body.
- (iv) This is to be established in us by faith despite the overwhelming signs of the onset of a spiritual *'winter'*. The *'teal tree'* and the *'oak'* are casting *'their leaves'*, (autumn, proceeding towards winter, is the image here); yet the very means of continued life (the *'substance'*) is still present (though hidden) in their bare and tortured forms;
- (v) That means, or vehicle, or promise, of continued life is identified as *'the holy seed'* – the remnant, God's true people through whom the Lord will continue His unceasing and eternal work – Halleluiah!

In the Babylonian captivity there was an Ezekiel, a Daniel; but also an Ezra, a Nehemiah, and a people who would ultimately (and literally) *'return'* to re-establish God's unchanging purpose for His people.

In the darkness and despondency following the crucifixion of Jesus, from all who may have heard Him *'in the days of His flesh'*, God secured to Himself a *'holy seed'* to wait for his promise in the upper room in Jerusalem.

In the Babylonian gloom and the spiritual winter of our day, dear saint of God, the same is true: there is a *'tenth'*, a *'holy seed'* about to spring forth with renewed life before He comes! O, believe it, child of God; and determine to be a part of it – in Jesus name, Amen.

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QUOTE

"God...deals with a remnant. He only deals with a remnant. He is always seeking a remnant. Everything he does is for a remnant. He builds his house with a remnant. God looks upon a remnant as the greatest treasure in the world." – Don Fortner

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE REMNANT

By T Austin-Sparks

Isa.44v28; 45v1-3; Ezra 1v1-2

God's People in Babylon. Here in Isaiah you have the whole ground covered; the Lord taking a people, a nation, Israel, for the expression of Himself in divine fullness, the nation as a whole failing Him, and He knowing beforehand that it is going to fail Him and, foreseeing it, takes action before they fail.

This word or two about Cyrus and to Cyrus is a prophetic utterance many years before Cyrus was born. *"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus."* Where was Cyrus in the day that was uttered? You will not find him. Here you find the Lord speaking about a remnant before they went into captivity and the instrument which should bring them back, send them back; and the building of the temple before the destruction of the temple.

It is all spoken of before anything happens. God has His eye upon that second inner company before the whole company has gone into captivity. God has chosen the instrument of deliverance before there was any call for deliverance at all...

His sovereign apprehension of Cyrus. *"That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus."* *"I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me"* (Isa.45v5). That is sovereignty. A man who does not know the Lord, girded by the Lord to do the Lord's work; irreligious solicitude for God; sovereignty at work to secure God's end...

What is the significance of this? All I can say is this, that God has sovereignly made His provision for all times of declension. That is God's sovereign reaction in which He says, in effect, whenever declension sets in and things begin to lose their purity, Here is your provision, I have secured it for you, it is there, everything is provided to meet the situation.

You are not left without guidance; you are not left without light in a dark day. You can take hold of these later letters and say, *"Arise, shine; for thy light is come"* (Isa.60v1). Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but here is your light.

The sovereign act of God has made provision for what He saw was coming, and in every age here it is right to hand. God does not accommodate Himself to the situation and say, 'Well, we must make the best of a bad job, we must be content with a little.' He has taken sovereign precaution against that...

It is going to be costly, a lonely way, but the sovereignty of God is there. *"The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him"* (II Chron.16v9). There is sovereignty toward those who will not compromise.

QUOTE

"God always had a remnant and that remnant does not mean the insignificant end of a thing, but it is characterised by the brightest trait of the original." – J.B. Stoney