



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 69



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2000) KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE BROTHERS RETURN TO JOSEPH

Gen 43:1 "And the famine was sore in the land. ² And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. ³ And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. ⁴ If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: ⁵ But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. ⁶ And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? ⁷ And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? ⁸ And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. ⁹ I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: ¹⁰ For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time. ¹¹ And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: ¹² And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: ¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: ¹⁴ And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. ¹⁵ And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph." Gen 43:1-15

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

The famine in Canaan grew worse, and they consumed the grain Jacob's sons had obtained from Egypt. When this occurred, Jacob told his sons to return to Egypt and buy more corn. Judah solemnly reminded him that the

ruler had demanded them to return with Benjamin or die. When Jacob asked why they had mentioned they had other brothers, Judah answered that the ruler had asked them about their father and any other brothers. Jacob finally consents to Benjamin returning with

them, doing so with some reluctance. He instructs the sons to take some of the best fruit of the land, with some balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds. They were also to take twice as much money, carrying it in their hand. The brothers took everything

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Jacob had commanded, double money in their hand, and Benjamin. Jacob sent them with the prayer that God would give them mercy before the man. As for himself, he said, *"If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."* The second time, they now travel to Egypt for grain. They have no idea what they will confront when they arrive.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND HUMAN INVOLVEMENT

Historically, Christian leaders, and the general Christian populace as well, have had some difficulty putting the Sovereignty of God and human involvement together. Some have chosen to exclude human involvement, declaring that such contradicts the Sovereignty of God. Others make human involvement the primary consideration. Both extremes attempt to buttress their views with Scripture, with neither side being moved away from their position.

There are at least three approaches that can be taken to this, and similar theological dilemmas.

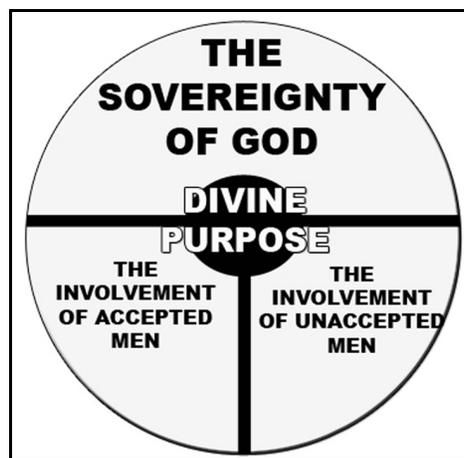
- ➔ Read everything the Scriptures have to say on these subjects, and draw some conclusions.
- ➔ Accept a traditional view of

preference, while expending no personal effort to arrive at a satisfactory understanding.

- ➔ Expose our minds to what God has said on these subjects, but, in addition, consider how God has worked with those He has chosen, and what He requires of them.

I have chosen the latter approach, adding the following in my considerations.

- ➔ What is the revealed purpose of God?
- ➔ What is the perceived association of Divine activity and human involvement with that purpose. I understand that this will not be a simplistic matter, and that there will be some things that transcend our understanding.



All of this can be seen in the events recorded in the book of Genesis. In these writings we clearly see the Sovereignty of God and the involvement of man. We will find there are areas in which human involvement is in measure, to say the least, while it is rather extensive in other areas.

All of this does have relevance to the text we are considering. I ask that you bear with me while I make an effort to establish some valid points.

ADAM AND EVE

- ➔ God was Sovereign in the creation of Adam and Eve.
- ➔ Adam played no participatory role in his creation.

- ➔ Adam was used in the creation of Eve, but played no active role in the process.
- ➔ Eve's creation was wholly of the Lord.
- ➔ Adam and Eve were given work to do – tending the Garden.
- ➔ God instructed them what they could and could not eat.
- ➔ Although God is over the devil, He allowed him some liberty in the tempting of Eve.
- ➔ Eve was responsible for her response to Satan.
- ➔ Adam was responsible for his response to Eve.
- ➔ God had the last word in the whole incident, expelling Adam and Eve from the very Garden into which He had placed them.
- ➔ God revealed through Adam and Eve that humanity was made to serve, that they were responsible for choosing who they would serve, and that there was a consequence for the wrong choice.

NOAH

- ➔ Noah's life was incidental until he found grace in the eyes of the Lord – a period of about 480 years.
- ➔ God saw Noah as *"righteous"* in his generation (Gen 7:1).
- ➔ God decreed the destruction of everything that had life, Sovereignly exempting Noah and his family.
- ➔ Noah had to build an ark in which he and his family would be saved.
- ➔ Noah had to make provision for a host of animals coming into the ark, gathering food for them.
- ➔ Noah had to care for his family and the animals while they were in the ark.
- ➔ God protected Noah and his family, while He destroyed everything and everyone else.

ABRAHAM

- ➔ The first seventy years of Abraham's life were incidental – until he was called by God. He came from an idolatrous background.
- ➔ Abraham had to leave his homeland and his family, and journey to Canaan.
- ➔ Abraham was directed as he journeyed. He was also protected.
- ➔ Abraham had to learn to trust God,

believing that what God promised would happen, even though there was nothing natural that supported that reasoning.

- ➔ Abraham went through a series of experiences to arrive at the conclusion that his seed would be born miraculously (Eliezer, Ishmael, and 25 years of experience).
- ➔ Isaac's birth was miraculous, even though both Abraham and Sarah were involved, just as though the whole matter was wrought by them.
- ➔ In the offering of Isaac, Abraham was commanded to do something in which his faith and determination would be revealed.
- ➔ Abraham had to do something he did not desire to do – cast out Hagar and Ishmael.

ISAAC

- ➔ Unlike Abraham, Isaac was required to remain in Canaan during a famine.
- ➔ Isaac was required to plant and harvest, with God blessing his labors.
- ➔ Isaac had to contend with enemies – the herdmen of Gerar.
- ➔ God blessed Isaac in spite of a famine and opposition by people.

JACOB

- ➔ Jacob was chosen by God before he was born.
- ➔ God's choice had to be perfected in the midst of contradicting circumstances.
- ➔ Until he was probably in his mid-twenties, his life was incidental.
- ➔ Jacob had to deal with Esau.
- ➔ Jacob had to contend with wily Laban, and work his way through his subtlety.
- ➔ Jacob had to live for some years

thinking Joseph was dead.

JOSEPH

- ➔ Until he was seventeen, Joseph's life was incidental.

OUR TEXT

In our text, a number of personalities have become involved in Joseph's life. He has servants to

In our text, a number of personalities have become involved in Joseph's life. He has servants to manage. He is administrating the distribution of grain to Egypt and surrounding nations. He is dealing with ten of his brothers, and doing so with wisdom and patience.

- ➔ Joseph had to endure the hatred of his brothers.
- ➔ He was sold into slavery.
- ➔ He was required to manage the household of Potiphar.
- ➔ He had to confront and resist the approaches of Potiphar's wife.
- ➔ He was incarcerated because of a false charge.
- ➔ He became responsible for the prisoners when he himself was in prison.
- ➔ He interpreted the dreams of the baker and the butler.
- ➔ This is all explained as God sending him down to Egypt to save the lives of people.
- ➔ He had to administrate the gathering and distribution of grain for a period of fourteen years.
- ➔ God was with Joseph and blessed him in contradiction of his circumstances.

manage. He is administrating the distribution of grain to Egypt and surrounding nations. He is dealing with ten of his brothers, and doing so with wisdom and patience. He is working to get Benjamin down into Egypt. There is the matter of his father, Jacob, and what he is going to do in regards to him. Much of this activity requires instant decisions and responses.

My point is that when people are involved with God they are more than mere receivers. Neither do they operate in a robotic or automated state. Divine direction does not exclude the use of the mind and the employment of discretion. When God calls an individual into His purpose, all of their persons will be employed – spirit, soul, and body; heart, soul, mind, and strength. **The persons themselves become involved in what the Lord is doing.**

THE FAMINE WAS SORE IN THE LAND

Gen 43:1 **"And the famine was sore in the land."** Other versions read, "severe," ^{NKJV} "in bitter need of food," ^{BBE} "grievous" ^{DARBY} "heavy upon all the land," ^{DOUAY} "prevailed," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "grew worse," ^{NJB} "continued to ravage the land of Canaan," ^{NLT} "no relief from the

terrible famine," ^{LIVING} "got worse," ^{CEV} and the hunger and destitution and starvation were very severe and extremely distressing in the land [Canaan]." ^{AMPLIFIED} The word translated "sore" has the following lexical meaning: "HEAVY, GREAT . . . MASSIVE, ABUNDANT,

NUMEROUS . . . HARD, DIFFICULT, BURDENSOME . . . VERY OPPRESSIVE." ^{STRONG'S}

DISPENSING WITH SOME FALSE TEACHING

These days it has become fashionable in Christian circles to say

that God only send good things, and the devil is the one who sends bad things. Thus some preachers and teachers with low spiritual IQ's tell us that storms, tornadoes, floods, famines, etc, do not come from God. Some of them affirm these "natural" disasters can actually be rebuked by believers, and made to either die out, or pass by a given area. However, let us look more closely at the text before us.

- ➔ The prophecy of this very famine came in the form of two dreams: one of seven fat and seven lean cows, and one of seven fat and seven thin heads of grain.
- ➔ Interpreting the dreams, Joseph solemnly said to Pharaoh, *"This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he showeth unto Pharaoh"* (Gen 41:28).
- ➔ It is expressly stated that *"the thing [prophesied] is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass"* (Gen 41:32).

There is no need to comment further on the matter. The person who says that God does not do such things has only revealed their own unbelief, and has contradicted an express statement revealed by Almighty God.

Elsewhere God has said He would *"send" a famine*, often as a punishment (Jer 24:10; 29:17; Ezek 5:16,17; 14:13,21). Other times God said to *"bring" a famine* (Jer 42:17). Again, God is said to have *"called for a famine"* (2 Kgs 8:1; Psa 105:16). Yet another time God warned, *"I will kill thy root with famine"* (Isa 14:30). Again He said He would *"punish" the disobedient with a famine* (Jer 11:22). And *"consume" them with a famine*

(Jer 14:12).

What Is the Point?

Someone might ask, "What is the point of all of this? Why bring up the fact that God can and does send famines? **The point is that men ought to fear the Lord!** They ought to be afraid to sin, and tremble at the thought of transgression. Nehemiah once said, *"ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?"* (Neh 5:9). The NIV reads, *"to avoid the reproach of your enemies?"* The NRSV reads, *"to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies."* The Amplified Bible reads, *"to prevent the taunts and reproach of the nations, our enemies."*

It is said of the early church, *"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied"* (Acts 9:31).

The Holy Spirit has moved men to write of the works of God – the things that He has done. They have been written to acquaint us with God's character, ability, and manners. Thus far in Genesis we have been exposed to His reaction to sin. Here are some of them.

- ➔ Adam and Eve cursed (Gen 3:16-19).
- ➔ Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden (Gen 3:24).
- ➔ Cain cursed (Gen 4:11-12).
- ➔ The global flood that destroyed everything alive, saving the occupants of the ark (Gen 7:21-23).
- ➔ The cursing of Canaan (Gen 9:24).

- ➔ The scattering of the people at Shinar (Gen 11:1-6).
- ➔ The plaguing of the house of Pharaoh (Gen 12:17).
- ➔ The casting out of Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:10-12).
- ➔ Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26).
- ➔ The closing of the wombs of the women in Abimelech's household (Gen 20:18).
- ➔ The slaying of Onan and Er (Gen 38:7-10).
- ➔ Seven years of famine over Egypt and other countries (Gen 41:27-28).

These accounts must move us to determine to please the Lord and not provoke Him. As Paul wrote, *"Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?"* (1 Cor 10:22).

These days a God is being preached that is not feared, and what is being said of this false god makes it unreasonable to fear him. **God takes all of this personally and will not excuse it as though it was nothing more than an innocent misunderstanding.**

THE FAMINE INCREASES IN INTENSITY

As time progressed, the famine grew worse. Food was obtained with more and more difficulty. **Again, this is something the Lord was doing**, setting the stage for a preeminent work that would involve the sending of a Savior into the world – one through whom all families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 27:14).

Among other things, this confirms that individuals, or groups of individuals, are not the pivot upon which the purpose of God turns. Sometimes, as in our text, what God is doing brings great inconvenience and hardship to people – even His people!

Such is the case in our text. Here is a famine that is continuing to increase in intensity, devouring natural

Why bring up the fact that God can and does send famines? The point is that men ought to fear the Lord! They ought to be afraid to sin, and tremble at the thought of transgression.

resources, and rendering the land incapable of producing fruit. This was, indeed, a “sore,” increasing, and ravaging famine in which a large part of farming became obsolete and futile. **It made no difference how hard the farmer worked, or how creative and industrious he was, it was all in vain – pointless.** However, God has also provided a way of escape!

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING THAT MAN DOES NOT GOVERN CIRCUMSTANCE

The truth of the matter is that ultimately man does not govern circumstances. Also, man must learn that God can impose circumstances upon men – like famines (2 Kgs 8:1; Psa 105:16; Jer 24:10), floods (Gen 6:17), pestilence (Lev 26:25; Num

14:12), plagues (Ex 32:35; Jos 24:5), fiery holocausts (Gen 19:24; Lev 10:1; Num 16:35), etc. During these times men are helpless and powerless.

O, how important it is that men learn the power of the God of heaven, and submit to Him with joy. God has determined that all will bow the knee to Jesus. It is best to willingly do this now.

BUY US A LITTLE FOOD

“² And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.”

“IT CAME TO PASS”

This phrase is mentioned 453 times in Scripture. It is more than the mere recounting of something that happened to occur. **Quite frequently, if not the majority of the time, it introduces either the end or the commencement of a phase of Divine working.** It is something like God’s calendar language, supporting the postulate that **history is really the working out of the purpose of God.** In this case, “*it came to pass*” moves us further into what the Lord was doing.

WHEN THEY HAD EATEN UP THE CORN

“And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt . . .” Other versions read, “*finished eating the grain,*” ^{NASB} “*the grain . . . was all used up,*” ^{BBE} “*used up all the grain,*” ^{NAB} “*the grain they had brought from Egypt was almost gone,*” ^{LIVING} “*was beginning to eat the last of the grain.*” ^{ISV}

The idea here is not that they had finished eating every bit of the grain. Rather, it is that they were preparing to consume the last portion of it, like the widow the Lord commanded to feed Elijah. When the prophet came to her as the Lord had directed him, she said, “*As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel,*

and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die” (1 Kgs 17:12).

That is where Jacob and his seed were at – preparing to consume the last of the grain they had received.

GO AGAIN

“ . . . their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.” Other versions read, “*a little more food,*” ^{NIV} “*procure some food for us,*” ^{TNK} and “*a small amount of food.*” ^{ABP}

The Hebrew word for “*little*” is in the text, although some versions omit it

was on a **rationed** basis – **only what they were able to use.** This way, there would be no waste, either of the source supplied in Egypt, or by those who purchased the grain.

Things To Be Learned

There are some spiritual principles that can be seen in this management of the grain in Egypt.

There Is A Sense in Which You Cannot Store A Lot

In Christ Jesus, there is a sense in which you cannot have more than you use. For example, the precious gems of truth pertaining to Christ, if not used in a life dedicated wholly to the Lord, will

We live “by every Word of God” – not by a seasonal word, or a sporadic word, or one now and then. If we are not living by every word of God, it should not surprise us that we cannot recall critical matters at critical times.

(CSB,TNK,CEV,ERV,ISV,MESSAGE). The Hebrew word translated “*little*” means, “LITTLENESS, FEW, A LITTLE, FEWNESS . . . LITTLE, SMALL . . . FEWNESS.” ^{STRONGS}

It is apparent that Joseph, in selling the grain, did not allow for the storage of a large supply of grain off-site. While the grain was sold to all, it

slip away from you. In an hour of crisis or deep need, such a person will forget that he is being tried (James 1:12; 1 Pet 1:7), that there is a way of escape in temptation (1 Cor 10:13), that he can do all things through Christ (Phil 4:13), or that in Him we have access to everything that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3). **Only when our**

spiritual senses are “exercised” are we able to “discern both good and evil” (Heb 5:14).

Many professing believers live in spiritual impoverishment, unable to tap into the vast reservoir of truth and grace in the time of need, simply because they have not presented their bodies a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Rom 12:1). Too much trivia and non-essential things have crept into their lives, and now dominate them. The result of this misdirection is that they cannot access what they know in their intellect – things they have heard, and may have even enjoyed at one time. **But they find by experience, that truth and grace**

unused finally become unusable. We live “by every Word of God” – not by a seasonal word, or a sporadic word, or one now and then. If we are not living by every word of God, it should not surprise us that we cannot recall critical matters at critical times.

You Do Not Get More Until You Have Used What You Received

Another fact in Jesus that we must firmly grasp is that **we will not receive “more” from God until we use what we have.** In Christ, learning is like building an edifice. As we proceed upward, materials are made available to us as we use what materials we have. This process is called “edification,” or growing up into Christ in all things (2

Cor 13:10; Eph 4:15).

In other words, when faith gets hold of a word from God, it trusts in that word, and the person builds his life around it. A person who fails to do this will **not** grow up into Christ in all things, for he will **not** be given the things essential to growth.

Why would God give more to an unfaithful steward? The very thought that He would do so is repulsive and contradictory to the spiritually minded. **Yet there is an alarming practice in our time of neglecting what has been given by God, yet expecting Him to give more.** It is an erroneous way of thinking.

JUDAH SPEAKS CONCERNING THE MATTER

“³ And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.⁴ If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:⁵ But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.”

We have no idea how much time had elapsed since their last trip to Egypt. However long it was, Simeon

during they time in Egypt, Joseph said the famine had been two years in length, with five more years remaining (Gen 45:6).

THE MAN DID SOLEMNLY PROTEST
 “And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you...”

Although Jacob had said earlier that he would not send Benjamin back with them (Gen 42:38), Judah will now

attestation of an oath,”^{DOUAY} “charged us by an oath,”^{GENEVA} “gave us a severe warning,”^{GWN} “did earnestly forewarn us,”^{JPS} “protesting protested to us,”^{YLT} “wasn't fooling one bit,”^{LIVING} “solemnly and sternly warned us,”^{AMPLIFIED} “distinctly warned us,”^{ISV} “fiercely protested,”^{LITV} “warned us most emphatically.”^{MESSAGE}

By these words Judah meant:

- ➡ The words of the ruler were clear.
- ➡ There was no question about the ruler’s intention.
- ➡ They were attended by an obvious determination.
- ➡ There was not the slightest suggestion that he would not do precisely what he said.
- ➡ This would also mean they would all die, and Jacob would have only one surviving son.

These things being true, if the brothers did return to Egypt without Benjamin, the ruler would not even come out to see them – and he is the only one who could distribute the grain.

had remained bound in prison all of that time – at least we assume that was the case. I suppose Joseph could have been considerate of Simeon. However, that would have cast some doubts on his integrity. I choose to think that Simeon remained in prison, though probably not subject to cruelty. **We do know that**

appeal to Jacob, underscoring the gravity of the situation.

Other versions read, “solemnly warned,”^{NKJV} “with an oath,”^{BBE} “was absolutely serious,”^{CEB} “expressly warned us,”^{CJB} “did positively testify to us”^{DARBY} “declared unto us with the

Judah leaves Jacob no alternative. These are mature men, not children, so the matter of children being subject to their parents does not apply.

SEND OUR BROTHER AND WE WILL GO

*“ . . . If thou wilt **send** our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food . . . ”*

Judah leaves Jacob no alternative. These are mature men, not children, so the matter of children being subject to their parents does not apply. Judah knows the circumstance, that it will be pointless to go to Egypt to buy corn if the demands of the ruler have not been met. He therefore recounts what the ruler had said.

THE MAN SAID UNTO US

“ . . . But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. ”

Without being accompanied by Benjamin, the ruler would not even speak to them, much less sell them grain. Therefore Judah is dogmatic: *“But if you will **not** send him, we will **not** go down. ”* ^{NKJV}

A Lesson to Be Learned

There is a lesson that can be learned in this incident. Joseph, in this case, is a type of the Lord, distributing food and resources to the people. When coming to Him for this spiritual goods, however, there are certain requirements – like Benjamin accompanying his brothers in their return to Egypt. There are some people who go to the Lord,

There are some people who can go to the Lord, yet receive nothing. They have not met His requirements. If we want recourse to God, we must pay attention to what He requires of us – just as surely as Joseph’s brothers had to heed what he said.

yet receive nothing, because they have ignored His revealed stipulations. Here are some of them.

- ➔ *“Come out from among”* unbelievers” (2 Cor 6:17a).
- ➔ *“Be ye separate”* (2 Cor 6:17b).
- ➔ *“Touch not the unclean thing”* (2 Cor 6:17-18).
- ➔ *“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”* (2 Cor 7:1)
- ➔ Draw near with a *“true heart”* (Heb 10:22a).
- ➔ Draw near in the *“full assurance of faith”* (Heb 10:22b).
- ➔ Draw near having your heart

“sprinkled from an evil conscience” (Heb 10:22c).

- ➔ Draw near having our bodies *“washed with pure water”* (Heb 10:22d).
- ➔ Drawing near by the “better hope” that is in Christ Jesus (Heb 7:19).
- ➔ *“Ask in faith, nothing wavering”* (James 1:6).
- ➔ Coming to the Lord without doubt (James 1:6-7).

There are some people who can go to the Lord, yet receive nothing. They have not met His requirements. They have failed to do what He has said. If we want recourse to God, we must pay attention to what He requires of us – just as surely as Joseph’s brothers had to heed what he said.

WHY DID YOU DEAL SO ILL WITH ME

“ ⁶ And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? ⁷ And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?”

WHEREFORE DEALT YE SO ILL WITH ME?

“And Israel said, Wherefore dealt

ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? . . . ”

Other versions read, *“why did you deal so wrongfully with me,”* ^{NKJV} *“why did you treat me so badly,”* ^{NASB} *“why did you bring this trouble upon me,”* ^{NIV} *“Why were you so cruel to me,”* ^{BBE} *“Why have you caused me such pain,”* ^{CEB} *“You have done this for my misery”* ^{DOUAY} *“Why did ye harm me,”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“Why did ye evil to me,”* ^{YLT} *“Why are you making my life so difficult!”* ^{MESSAGE} and *“Why did you do me such a wrong*

and suffer this evil to come upon me.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

One senses a tone of exasperation in Jacob’s words – *“Why did you tell the man that you had another brother?”* ^{CSB} By nature, and independently of the new creation, man’s powers of reason fail him when he is faced with what is perceived to an irremediable situation. Therefore, he asks why his sons told the ruler that they had a younger brother, even though he had not provided them with any directive or

word that prohibited divulging that information. I am sure Jacob had no idea he would receive the answer that follows.

THE MAN ASKED US

“And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words...”

The brothers reported the ruler had asked them about three things: their state, or condition; their kindred; and their father.

There is no record of these words being said by Joseph. That does not necessarily mean they were not said. What the brothers had said to Joseph, in answer to his charge that there were spies, is, *“Thy servants are twelve*

brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not” (Gen 42:13). This they had just reported to their father (Gen 42:32).

Actually, there is no doubt about their statement being true. Later, when they return to Egypt, Judah said to Joseph (not knowing who he was), *“My lord asked his servants, saying, **Have ye a father, or a brother?** And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst*

*unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, **we told him the words of my lord”*** (Gen 44:19-24). They had told Jacob the truth!

COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?

“ . . . could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?” Other versions read, *“But they said, “Could we possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”* ^{NKJV}

The brothers had not conducted themselves thoughtlessly. They insinuated by their answer that if they had any idea the ruler would have commanded them to return with their younger brother, they would have shaped their answer in another way.

SEND THE LAD WITH ME

*“⁸ And Judah said unto Israel his father, **Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.** ⁹ I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: ¹⁰ For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.”*

Time was marching on, and Judah knows that none of them will survive they do not return to Egypt and buy more grain.

SEND THE LAD WITH ME

*“And Judah said unto Israel his father, **Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go . . .”*** Other versions read, *“send the boy along with me,”* ^{NIV} *“Send the young man with me,”* ^{CEB} *“Let Benjamin go with me,”* ^{CEV} *“Send the youth with me,”* ^{LITV} and *“Let the boy go; I’ll take charge of him.”* ^{MESSAGE}

One might judge from the language that Benjamin was a young

child:—i.e. *“lad,” “boy,” “youth.”* The Hebrew word translated “lad” has the following lexical meaning: *“(CONCRETELY) A BOY (AS ACTIVE), FROM THE AGE OF INFANCY TO ADOLESCENCE; BY IMPLICATION, A SERVANT; ALSO (BY INTERCH. OF SEX), A GIRL (OF SIMILAR LATITUDE IN AGE): —BABE, BOY, CHILD, DAMSEL (FROM THE MARGIN), LAD, SERVANT, YOUNG (MAN).”* ^{STRONG’S} The meaning of the word may be determined by either the literary context, or the textual frame of reference. The meaning can range from an *“infant”* to a *“young man.”* Which meaning is appropriate here?

OTHER WRITERS ON THE AGE OF BENJAMIN

The Pulpit Commentary says, *“THOUGH STYLED A LAD, MUST HAVE BEEN AT THIS TIME UPWARDS OF TWENTY YEARS OF AGE.”*

John Gill writes, *“ . . . HE MUST BE THIRTY TWO YEARS OF AGE, FOR HE WAS SEVEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN JOSEPH, WHO WAS NOW THIRTY NINE YEARS OF AGE; YEA, BENJAMIN MUST HAVE CHILDREN OF HIS OWN, WHO WENT WITH HIM AND HIS FATHER INTO EGYPT (GENESIS 46:21); FOR THE COMPUTATION OF BENJAMIN’S AGE, SEE GENESIS 30:22 31:41 35:18 37:2 41:40,53,54 45:6.”*

Keil & F. Delitzsch say, *“BENJAMIN WAS TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD.”*

Matthew Henry writes: *“BENJAMIN WAS AT THIS TIME AT LEAST TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE, SOME THINK THIRTY, AND HAD A FAMILY OF HIS OWN.”*

THE POINT OF DRAWING ATTENTION TO THIS

WHEN THE SCRIPTURES ARE TRANSLATED INTO ANOTHER LANGUAGE, NOT ONLY MUST THE TRANSLATORS HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF TO AND FROM LANGUAGES, THEY MUST HAVE A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES, AS WELL AS THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE. IN THIS TEXT, BEING AWARE OF WHAT IS REVEALED ABOUT BENJAMIN SHOULD HAVE PROMPTED SOME OF THE TRANSLATORS TO SELECT A WORD THAT MORE PRECISELY DESCRIBED THE SITUATION. AMONG OTHER THINGS THIS ILLUSTRATES THE FALLACY OF MERE ETYMOLOGICAL AND LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVES. THOSE WHO AFFIRM THAT A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF SCRIPTURE REQUIRES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE IN WHICH SCRIPTURE WAS WRITTEN ARE SIMPLY WRONG. AFTER ALL OF THE ARGUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED ALL ETYMOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS FALL UNDER THE HEADING OF “THE WISDOM OF MAN” AND “THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD.”

The sons of Benjamin are named in Genesis 46:21, **which accounts for Jacob before he went to Egypt, and they are included in the seed of Jacob that went down into Egypt:** *"And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard"* – **Ten sons!**

THAT WE MAY LIVE

" . . . that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. . . " Other versions read, *"so that we and you and our children may live and not die,"* ^{NIV} *"so that we and you and our little ones may not come to destruction,"* ^{BBE} *"so that we can stay alive and not die--we, you, and our children,"* ^{CEB} *"so that we won't starve to death,"* ^{GWN} *"if you and we and our children are to keep from starving to death,"* ^{NAB} *"otherwise we will all die of starvation--and not only we, but you and all our little ones."* ^{LIVING}

Judah is **not** speaking of the death with which they were threatened by the ruler of Egypt, which, unbeknown to him, was Joseph (Gen 42:20). They had used, or probably were using, the very last food they had, and there was no more for them in the land of Canaan or surrounding areas. Death was imminent.

I WILL BE SURETY FOR HIM

" . . . I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever . . . " Other versions read, *"I will guarantee his safety,"* ^{NASB} *"make me responsible for him,"* ^{BBE} *"hold me personally accountable"* ^{CSB} *"of my hand shalt thou require him,"* ^{DARBY} *"you may hold me liable,"* ^{NET} *"from out of my hand you may seek him,"* ^{ABP} *"it's my life on the line for his,"* ^{MESSAGE} *"I will be security for him."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the first time this particular word is used in the Bible: *"surety,"* translated from the Hebrew word "arab." There is another Hebrew word translated *"surety"* – *"yada."* This additional word means "TO KNOW (PROPERLY, TO ASCERTAIN BY SEEING) . . . BE AWARE . . . BE SURE, OF A SURETY, TEACH, (CAN) TELL, UNDERSTAND, HAVE (UNDERSTANDING) . . ." ^{STRONG'S} It is generally

found in the expression, "know of a surety," (Gen 15:13; 18:13; 26:9), or something similar.

However, as used here, the word *"surety"* (Hebrew = "arab") means "GIVE TO BE SECURITY (AS A KIND OF EXCHANGE) . . . GIVE PLEDGES, BE(-COME, PUT IN) SURETY. . ." ^{STRONG'S} (Gen 44:32; Psa 119:122; Prov 6:1). It parallels the Greek word for *"surety"* as used in Hebrews 7:22. The lexical meaning of this words is, "ONE WHO GUARANTEES THE REALITY OF SOMETHING." ^{LOUW NIDA}

In saying he would be the surety of Benjamin, Judah was saying that he would be the personal guarantor of the safety of Benjamin. The safety of his brother would depend solely upon him, and he would willingly accept that responsibility.

This is the first time in Scripture that this concept is introduced. It goes beyond, and is separate from, being a substitute – like the lambs offered in sacrifice to God.

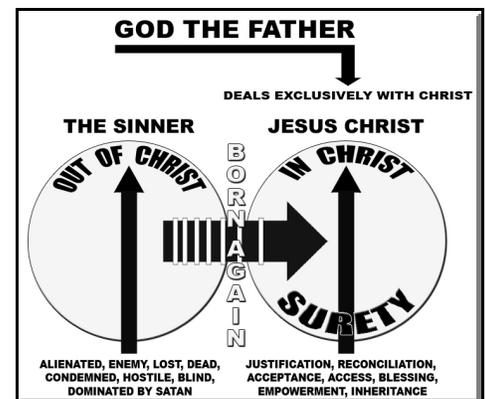
The Type Fulfilled in Christ

This was the Lord's way of introducing men to the kind of Savior that would be realized in Christ Jesus. He would be a Conqueror, to be sure, defeating the foe thoroughly and once and for all. **As a "Surety" the Christ would be responsible for the ones being saved, and God would accept Him in that capacity.** Thus it is written, *"And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament"* (Heb 7:20-22). The Amplified Bible reads, *"And it was not without the taking of an oath [that Christ was made Priest]. For those who formerly became priests received their office without its being confirmed by the taking of an oath by God, but this One was designated and addressed and saluted with an oath, The Lord has sworn and will not regret it or change His mind, You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. In keeping with [the oath's greater strength and*

force], Jesus has become the Guarantee of a better (stronger) agreement [a more excellent and more advantageous covenant]."

Jesus is our Surety . . .

- ➔ When we are drawn, it is because of Him.
- ➔ When we are granted repentance, it is because of Him.
- ➔ When we are forgiven, it is because of Him.
- ➔ The law of God is written upon our heart, and put into our mind, because of Him.
- ➔ When we are kept by the power of God, it is because of Him.
- ➔ God has pledged to save us because of Him.
- ➔ The New Covenant has actually been made with Christ: *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."* (Gal 3:16).
- ➔ Christ Himself has been given to the people as a Covenant: *"I the LORD have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles"* (Isa 42:6).



The parallel, like all types and shadows, is not complete in all of its

details. Yet, for the first time, God is introducing one person being a pledge for the other – one person being the guarantee of another. The parallel breaks down because Judah could not really guarantee the safety of Benjamin. **However, in the case of Jesus, all of God’s favorable dealings with His people is because of Jesus.** Their approach to God is through Jesus, and every benefit comes from Him.

Technically speaking, in salvation the status of a person with God does not depend on what they do, but rather upon whether or not it is done *“in Christ.”* The concentration of effort, therefore, is not on doing this or that, but on abiding in Christ (1 John 2:27-29), fighting the good fight of faith (1 Tim 6:12), and maintaining the fellowship with Christ into which we have been called (1 Cor 1:9). However easy that may appear to be, those who do not walk in the Spirit and live by faith cannot abide in Christ. Therefore, they cannot be advantaged by Him. This has some rather alarming implications.

WE HAD RETURNED THIS SECOND TIME

“ . . . For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.” Other versions read, *“For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”*
NKJV *“If we had not delayed, we would now have returned twice,”*
NRSV *“Truly, if we had not let the time go by, we might have come back again by now,”*
BBE *“we could have been there and back twice if we had not dawdled,”*
TNK *“For we could have gone and returned by this time if you had let him come.,”*
LIVING *“If you had let us go before, we could have already made two trips for food,”*
ERV *and “If we had gone ahead in the first place instead of procrastinating like this, we could have been there and back twice over.”*
MESSAGE

The sense of the text is not that they could have gone to Egypt and returned two more times, but that they could have done so *“this second time.”* It is also implied that they would have returned *“this second time”* with both Simeon and Benjamin.

This indicates that it took Jacob some time to make the final decision – however long was required to go to Egypt and come back again.

Unbelief Causes Delay

It ought to be noted that unbelief causes men to delay and waste time. **There are believers that could have**

Mk 1:31,42; 2:12; 5:30; 10:52; Lk 4:39; 5:13,25; 8:44; 13:13; 18:43; John 5:9). **That introduced men to the nature of the Kingdom of God.**

Jesus spoke of a certain Kingdom standard: *“And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when*

However easy that may appear to be, those who do not walk in the Spirit and live by faith cannot abide in Christ. Therefore, they cannot be advantaged by Him. This has some rather alarming implications.

made significant progress by this time is they were not procrastinators and dominated by unbelief. They may feel that what they are doing is important – like Jacob must have felt in resisting the demand that Benjamin be taken back to Egypt. **I feel that the majority of spiritual retardation is owing to the slowness of people to respond to the leading of the Spirit, and to various admonitions and exhortations that are delivered by various members of the body of Christ.** The word of the Lord is, *“continuing instant in prayer”* (Rom 12:12), and *“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”* (2 Tim 4:2). The lexical meaning of the word translated *“instant”* is: *“TO PERSEVERE (CONTINUE STEADFASTLY) IN ANYTHING; TO GIVE CONSTANT ATTENTION TO A THING . . . TO BE DEVOTED OR CONSTANT TO ONE; TO BE STEADFASTLY ATTENTIVE UNTO, TO GIVE UNREMITTING CARE TO A THING . . . TO SHOW ONESELF COURAGEOUS . . . TO BE IN CONSTANT READINESS FOR ONE, WAIT ON CONTINUALLY;”* THAYER *“BE CONTINUALLY READY FOR SOMEONE, STAND READY (MK 3.9); (2) WITH THE DATIVE OF THE THING; OCCUPY ONESELF DILIGENTLY WITH, PAY PERSISTENT ATTENTION TO.”*
FRIEBERG **The word carries the idea being ready, being devoted, and being diligently involved.** Therefore it necessarily includes the idea of being **immediate.**

The Lord’s miracles were noted for their immediacy (Matt 8:3; 20:34;

he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately” (Luke 12:36). When Jesus called James and John, *“they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”* (Matt 4:22). That is the manner of the Kingdom.

In the professed Christian community there is an appalling absence of this kind of response. It contradicts any profession of faith, and must be dealt with in the energy of faith, and with the spirit of total commitment to the Lord. **Retarded responses lead to spiritual dissipation.** Yet, there is a spiritual climate in the professed church that has led to lethargy, indifference, delay, and a lack of commitment. This evil climate has been produced by the teaching, preaching, emphasis, and programs of the church. There has been a concerted effort to bring the things of God down to a lower level. Those who have done so are completely oblivious of the fact that this has made it impossible for intended spiritual growth to occur. **It is something like trying to build and adapt a 747 jet airplane to fly long distances at an altitude of twenty feet.** That may be possible on an idealistic level, but it is impossible in the real world. It is just that impossible, and more, to produce acceptable disciples by shallow and infrequent teaching. It cannot be done!

IF IT MUST BE SO NOW, DO THIS

“¹¹ And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: ¹² And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.”

Jacob has now been persuaded of the necessity and practicality of sending Benjamin back to Egypt with his brothers. He could not afford to waste any more time quibbling.

IF IT MUST BE SO NOW

“And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now . . .” Other

I will tell you that if you were one of the twelve that Jesus chose, or a member of the next circle of followers, the thought would never have come into your mind that it was not necessary to be where Jesus was teaching.

versions read, *“If it has to be so,”* ^{BBE} *“If that’s how it is”* ^{CJB} *“If that’s the way it has to be”* ^{GWN} *“If it can’t be avoided,”* ^{NLT} *“If Benjamin must go with you,”* ^{CEV} *“If it is really true, take Benjamin with you,”* ^{ERV} and *“If it has to be, it has to be.”* ^{MESSAGE}

Although he does not like it, and does not really want to do it, Jacob bows to the demands of necessity. He sees there is something larger than his own preferences – a circumstance that outweighs what he thinks is best. Of course, it was the Lord turning his heart, having mercy upon him because of the Divine purpose that, unbeknown to him, was being worked out.

Do It Because It Is Necessary
There does come a time to every believer when, according to their own understanding, the only reason for doing what is right is because it is necessary. Unfortunately, some believers are taught that certain commanded reactions are not really necessary – like baptism, or being holy, or being separate from the world. **Unlike Jacob, they do not see the necessity of such things, and so they yield to delay, and justify their procrastination.**

In our time, these belated responses are like a plague that has come upon the professed church. **There are exceedingly few congregations that are not plagued with unresponsive people.** They do not see the necessity of being fed, being separate, or being a

contributive member of the body of Christ. Therefore, it is not uncommon to find preachers who deliver a message to hundreds on Lord’s Day morning, and few, or perhaps none, on Lord’s day evening. For a growing number of churches, a single assembly is scheduled for the entire week. And why is this so? Because that is all they think is required. **But, I will tell you that if you were one of the twelve that Jesus chose, or a member of the next circle of followers, the thought would never have come into your mind that it was not necessary to be where Jesus was teaching.** He taught by the sea side (Matt 13:1-2), in the mountain (Matt 5:1), in the desert (Mk 6:31-34), in

homes (Mk 2:1-2), in the synagogue (Matt 13:54), and in the Temple (Lk 19:47). **In ALL of these places, His disciples were with Him.** What do you suppose He would have said if one of them had asked Him, “Do we have to be here now?” Yet, this kind of question is heard daily among murmuring disciples.

TAKE OF THE BEST FRUITS

“ . . . do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds . . .” Other versions read, *“best products,”* ^{NASB} *“choice fruits,”* ^{NRSV} and *“the land’s choice produce.”* ^{CEB}

How is it that there was produce in a time of famine? Some have replied that while grain may not have grown, trees and pollinated plants may have continued to grow. ^{PULPIT COMMENTARY} I do not find this to be a satisfactory explanation.

Let us briefly examine the type of produce that was to be gathered in small quantities – *“a little.”*

- ➔ **BALM.** “Resinous substances which flow spontaneously or by incision from certain trees or plants, and are of considerable use in medicine and surgery.” ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG’S}
- ➔ **HONEY.** Honey of bees, vegetable honey distilled from plants, the syrup of dates, and the syrup of grapes. ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG’S}
- ➔ **SPICES.** “Aromatic substances.” ^{EASTON}
- ➔ **MYRRH.** Made from an odorous plant and used for embalming. ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG’S}
- ➔ **NUTS.** Thought to be the pistachio nut. ^{STRONG’S}
- ➔ **ALMONDS.** The valuable and useful fruit of the almond tree.

Notice that all of these gifts could be stored. They could very well have been taken from a storehouse rather than some plants. I prefer to view these as produce taken from a storehouse.

Notwithstanding, these were not the kind of fruit that could continue to sustain life. Some of them (honey, nuts, and almonds) were additional produce that could be stored, but could not be used as their exclusive diet.

SPIRITUAL DIET

There is also a form of spiritual food that cannot, of itself, sustain spiritual life. This is nourishment that has to do primarily with our manners and conduct.

OUR ASSOCIATION WITH GOD

At the high end would be teaching and exhortation related to our association with God. Examples are as follows.

- ➔ Presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1-2).
- ➔ Submitting our “members” as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13).
- ➔ Walking as “dear children” (Eph 5:1).
- ➔ Being ready to give an answer to every man who asks for a reason concerning our hope (1 Pet 3:15).

OUR ASSOCIATION WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Then, there is our association with the people of God. Examples of these are as follows.

- ➔ Loving the brethren (1 Pet 1:22).
- ➔ Edifying the people of God (Eph 4:29).
- ➔ Preferring one another (Rom 12:10).
- ➔ Provoking one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24).

DOMESTIC ASSOCIATIONS

There is the matter of family relationships. Responsibilities include the following:

- ➔ Husbands love your wives as your own bodies, and be not bitter against them (Eph 5:25-29; Col 3:19).
- ➔ Wives submit to, obey, and love your own husbands (Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18-19).
- ➔ Fathers, raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4)
- ➔ Children obey your parents (Eph 6:1-3).

Concerning These Things

None of these matters are to be avoided, and no person in Christ is free to ignore them. **They are not optional responsibilities.**

YET THESE ARE NOT THE THINGS THAT SUSTAIN SPIRITUAL LIFE. They are to life in Christ like the fruits and nuts were to those in the midst of a famine.

Should a person choose to place the emphasis of his teaching on these needful matters, it will not be long until

If eternal life is, in fact, knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3), then spiritual food that sustains the soul pertains directly to Them.

OUR POSTURE TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OF THE WORLD

There is our posture toward those who are of the world. Examples follow.

- ➔ Knowing how we ought to answer every man (Col 4:6).
- ➔ Doing things that are approved of men and cannot be legitimately condemned (Rom 14:18).
- ➔ Doing good unto all men (Gal 6:10).
- ➔ Praying for all men (1 Tim 2:1).
- ➔ Servants obeying masters (Eph 6:5).
- ➔ Being ready to give an answer for the hope within us (1 Pet 3:15).

RESPONSIBILITY TO GOVERNMENT

At the low end is our responsibility to rulers and government. Examples are as follows.

- ➔ Honor the king (1 Pet 2:17).
- ➔ Be subject to the higher powers (Rom 13:1).
- ➔ Pay tribute [taxes] (Rom 13:6).

the souls of those submitting themselves to such teaching will begin to wither. These are not the heart-beat or the bloodstream of spiritual life.

If eternal life is, in fact, knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17:3), then spiritual food that sustains the soul pertains directly to Them. **The knowledge of God and Christ, while it does not remove the necessity of the matters just mentioned, is vastly superior to them.** They are in juxtaposition with one another, yet are by no means equal. Spiritual life involves being “partakers of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4), and that is something that cannot be contained in human duty and responsibility. **Whether we are speaking of historical teachers or contemporary ones, those whose teaching places the stress on the duty of men always run out of things to say.** Eventually, they are repeating themselves over and over.

When it comes to knowing God and possessing spiritual understanding, such teaching also produces inferior disciples – deficient in understanding and lacking in commitment.

I take the position that Jacob told his sons to take twice as much money for the new purchase, plus the money that had been returned in their sacks. I do not doubt that he anticipated an increase in the cost of grain as the famine grew worse.

TAKE DOUBLE MONEY

“ . . . And take double money in your hand; **and** the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand . . .” Other versions read, “Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks,” ^{NIV} “take double money in your hand; **and** the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks carry again in your hand,” ^{ERV} “And take double money in your hand, **and** the money, that was brought again in your sacks mouths: carry it again in your hand” ^{GENEVA} “Take twice as much money with you. You must return the money that was put back in your sacks,” ^{GWN} “Take double money so that you can pay back what was in the mouths of your sacks,” ^{LIVING} “And take twice as much money with you; that is to say, take back the money which was put in your bags,” ^{BBE} “And take plenty of money--pay back double what was returned to your sacks,” ^{MESSAGE} “And take double money in your hands, **and** the money that was returned in your sacks, carry back with you,” ^{BRENTON} “And take double the [grain] money with you; **and** the money that was put back in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again with you.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

Double = New Purchase Plus Returned Money

Versions presenting this view: NIV, NRSV, RSV, BBE, DARBY, ESV, GWN, NAB, NET, NLT, TNK, YLT, LIVING, CEV, GNB, GW, and ISV.

Double = Twice as much for purchases Plus Returned Money

Versions presenting this view include KJV, NKJV, NASB, CEB, CJB, ERV, GENEVA, JPS, SEPTUAGINT, NAU, RWB, WEB, ABP, BRENTON, LITV, and AMPLIFIED.

Double = New Purchase Plus Repaying Twice the Returned Money

Versions presenting this view include THE MESSAGE Bible by Eugene Petersen.

The translators have again garbled the text, and the commentators have added to the complexity. This academic dilemma involves the following considerations:

- ➔ Did they take twice as much money for the new purchase, plus return the money returned in their sacks the first trip? John Gill, and Matthew Henry take this view in their commentary.

- ➔ Or was the “double money” an amount of money equal to their first purchase plus the amount returned in their sacks? Pulpit Commentary, Albert Barnes, Adam Clarke, and C.F. Keil & F. Delitzsch take this view in their commentaries.

- ➔ Or was the “double money” an amount for the new purchase plus twice the money returned in their sacks? Eugene Petersen in The Message Bible takes this view.

I take the position that Jacob told his sons to take twice as much money for the new purchase, plus the money that had been returned in their sacks. I do not doubt that he anticipated an increase in the cost of grain as the famine grew worse.

PERADVENTURE

“ . . . *peradventure* it was an oversight.” Other versions read, “perhaps it was a mistake,” ^{NASB} “it may have been an error.” ^{BBE}

Since Joseph had their money placed in their sacks, they had not seen him or sent any word to him. Knowing this to be the case (for the full discovery was not made unto the brothers arrived home), **Jacob considers that the whole matter might very well been a mistake of some sort, and reasons that returning the money would be a show of integrity.**

Perhaps this would lessen the danger that was feared by Jacob and his sons. This was a conscientious effort to do right. However, it was done with a limited understanding of all of the factors that were involved. We should not expect it to be flawless.

GOD ALMIGHTY GIVE YOU MERCY

“ ¹³ Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: ¹⁴ And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be

bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

GO AGAIN TO THE MAN

“Take also your brother, and arise,

go again unto the man . . .”

Notice the mutual respect that is manifested in this incident. Judah and the brothers saw the need to return to

Egypt with their brother, but refused to do so without the consent of Jacob. On the other hand, Jacob did not want to send Benjamin to Egypt, but saw the sense of what Judah said, and therefore consented to send Benjamin to Egypt with his brothers. **This is an excellent example of arriving at godly agreement.**

GOD ALMIGHTY

“ . . . And God Almighty . . . ” Other versions read, “God, the Ruler of all,” ^{BBE} “the sovereign God” ^{NET} “El Shaddai,” ^{NJB} “God All-Powerful,” ^{CEV} “The Strong God,” ^{MESSAGE} and “El-who suffices.” ^{INTERLINEAR}

The word from which “Almighty” is translated is “Shadday,” and means “ALMIGHTY, MOST POWERFUL, THE ALMIGHTY . . . IMPREGNABLE” ^{STRONG’S}

It is difficult for men to comprehend a Being with “all power.” It contradicts all human experience. When men think of transcendent power, they really mean someone or something with more power than they themselves possess.

Thus, when Jacob speaks of “God Almighty” he is not speaking from the standpoint of human experience, but from the perspective of revelation. Abraham is the first recorded person to whom God said, “I am the Almighty God” (Gen 17:1). He also revealed this to Jacob: “I am God Almighty” (Gen 35:11). All of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were within the context of “God Almighty,” or “the Almighty God.”

The fact of “the Almighty God” is what supports the statement, “God is able” (Matt 3:9; Rom 11:23; Rom 14:4; 2 Cor 9:8). Whatever God has committed to do, He is fully able to accomplish. Whatever or whoever is opposed to Him, He is fully able to cast down and abase. **He can “cause” His people to triumph, because He is “the Almighty God”** (2 Cor 2:14).

Settle it in your mind that God is “the Almighty God.” There is nothing that He requires of You that He is not able to enable you to do. There is no enemy He is not capable of subduing. No promise that He has made is beyond

His glorious capability.

Jacob did not know as much about God as you know, but He knew enough to commit his sons into the care of God, knowing that He could bless them in what they were about to do.

Wherever men seek to become specialists in problem resolution and

Jacob did not know as much about God as you know, but He knew enough to commit his sons into the care of God, knowing that He could bless them in what they were about to do.

behavioral correction, their view of God is something less than it should be. This is the reason for men developing methods of fasting, daily disciplines for realizing spirituality, accountability alliances, and other worldly-wise routines and patterns. **Their view of God is too small.** That is why they are not able to trust Him in these matters.

GIVE YOU MERCY

“ . . . give you mercy before the man . . . ” Other versions read, “grant you compassion in the sight of the man,” ^{NASB} “give you favor in the man’s sight,” ^{CJB} “cause the man to be merciful to you” ^{CSB} “make him favorable to you” (Gen 43:14 ^{DOUAY} “move the man to be kind to you” ^{NJB} “dispose the man to mercy toward you,” ^{TNK} and “cause the man to show compassion toward you.” ^{ISV}

Here is something Jacob seeks for God to do – and it has to do with effecting the way a person thinks. He desires for the Almighty God to change how the ruler thinks about his sons. He desires that God will cause him to show them mercy and favor, and be kindly disposed toward them. Where is free moral agency in that? Or does Jacob have a distorted view of God Almighty? But, he is even more specific in what he is seeking the Lord to do.

THAT HE MAY SEND YOUR BROTHER AND BENJAMIN

“ . . . that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin . . . ” Other versions read, “release your other brother and Benjamin,” ^{NKJV} “let your other brother and Benjamin come back to me,” ^{NIV} “send back,” ^{NRSV} “may give you back,” ^{BBE} “may deliver you,” ^{GENEVA} and “allow you to bring back.” ^{NJB}

You see the degree of God-consciousness Jacob had – even though he had been exposed to a relatively very small amount of revelation.

- ➔ God told Jacob He was “the God of Abraham” and “the God of Isaac” (Gen 28:13).
- ➔ God told Jacob his seed would be as the dust of the earth and would spread to the west, east, and north (Gen 28:14).
- ➔ God told Jacob He would be with him, keep him in all places where he went, and bring him again into Canaan (Gen 28:15a).
- ➔ God told Jacob He would not leave him until he had done everything He promised (Gen 28:15b).
- ➔ Jacob was told his name was changed to “Israel” because he had power with God and with men, and had prevailed (Gen 32:28; 35:10).
- ➔ God told him, He was “God Almighty.” (Gen 35:11a).
- ➔ God told him that a great nation and kings would come from him (Gen 35:11b).

The spiritual makeup of a person is revealed in what they are willing to do in order that the will of the Lord might be fulfilled in them.

➔ God told him He would give him the land promised to Abraham and Isaac (Gen 28:13; 35:12).

That is the extent of the revelation given to Jacob. Very little of it pertained to God Himself – only that He was “*God Almighty*.” He was introduced to God’s faithfulness in that the Lord promised to be with him, bring him into the land, and not leave him until He had done everything He promised.

Yet, what had been said to Jacob shaped the way he thought. He concluded God had mercy, and would confer it on whom he pleased. He concluded that God could cause one person to favor another – in particular He could change the ruler’s heart so that he would be inclined to send Simeon and Benjamin back home with their brothers. He learned to pray with specificity, and in accord with Divine capability and purpose.

How ought those in Christ Jesus be able to reason – with all that has been revealed about God to them. We know about God’s love, grace, purpose, desires, what he loves, and what he hates. His omnipotence has been unveiled in larger measures, and his intentions for the whole world have been made known. We know how He views faithful and unfaithful servants, and the kind of people He looks for – to bless and use them.

What kind of impact ought this to

have on the way we think, how we respond to crises, and what we determine to do? It certainly is something to ponder.

IF I AM BEREAVED . . .

“ . . . *If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.*” Other versions read, “*If my children are to be taken from me; there is no help for it,*” ^{BBE} “*if I’m left childless, then I’m left childless,*” ^{CEB} “*if I must lose my children, lose them I will*” ^{CJB} “*but I shall be robbed of my child, as I have been*” ^{GENEVA} “*if I am to suffer bereavement, I shall suffer it,*” ^{NAB} “*if I must lose my children, so be it,*” ^{NLT} “*and I, when I am bereaved -- I am bereaved,*” ^{YLT} “*if I must bear the anguish of their deaths, then so be it,*” ^{LIVING} “*for I accordingly as I have been bereaved, am bereaved,*” ^{BRENTON} “*If I must lose my children, I suppose I must,*” ^{CEV} and “*If not, I will again be sad from losing my children.*” ^{ERV}

This is an expression that expresses the willingness to “*suffer according to the will of God*” (1 Pet 4:19). It is similar to some other expressions of a resignation to the will of God, whatever it may be.

➔ Esther’s expression when she prepared to come before the king as Mordecai had said. She sent a message to him saying, “*Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so*

will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish” (Est 4:16).

➔ It is also related to the words of the lepers who stumbled on to an abandoned camp with an abundance of food: “*If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die*” (2 Kings 7:4).

➔ In the midst of an imminent battle Joab said, “*Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good*” (2 Sam 10:12).

➔ One of Paul’s responses to danger provides an even higher view of the subject: “*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God*” (Acts 20:24).

➔ Another time Paul said, “*What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 21:13).

➔ Paul said of Epaphroditus, “*Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me*” (Phil 2:30).

The spiritual makeup of a person is revealed in what they are willing to do in order that the will of the Lord might be fulfilled in them.

THEY WENT TO EGYPT AND STOOD BEFORE JOSEPH

“ ¹⁵ *And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.*”

As the brothers prepare to return to Egypt, they are very precise in their obedience, both to the ruler Joseph, and to their father, Jacob. Nothing demanded of them will be omitted or modified.

THE MEN TOOK THE PRESENT

"And the men took that present..." Other versions read, *"this present,"* ^{NASB} *"the gifts,"* ^{NIV} *"what their father said for the man,"* ^{BBE} *"having taken these presents,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"the men packed Jacob's gifts,"* ^{NLT} and *"took the gifts to give to the governor."* ^{ERV}

Both diligence and judgment were involved in gathering the gift for the governor. They had to carefully gather and correctly store the proper gifts:

- ➔ A little **BALM**. Jacob particularly said to take *"a little balm."* *"A KIND OF MEDICINAL SALVE."* ^{STRONG'S} The word translated *"little"* (ma'at), means *"LITTLENESS, FEW, A LITTLE, FEWNESS . . ."* ^{STRONG'S}
- ➔ A little **HONEY**.
- ➔ **SPICES**. *"PERHAPS TRAGACANTH GUM."* ^{STRONG'S}
- ➔ **MYRRH**. *"AROMATIC GUM."* ^{STRONG'S}
- ➔ **NUTS**. THOUGHT TO BE PISTACHIO NUTS. ^{STRONG'S}
- ➔ **ALMONDS**.

Each of these had to gathered in proper quantities, stored, and prepared for travel.

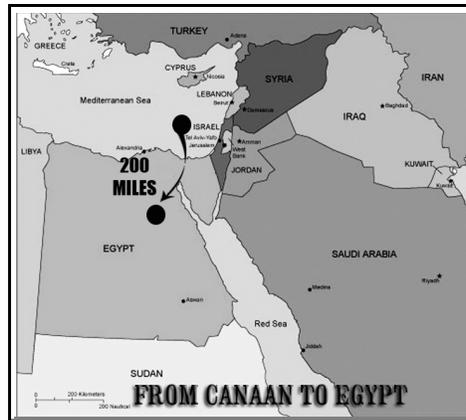
THEY TOOK DOUBLE MONEY IN THEIR HAND

" . . . and they took double money in their hand . . ." Other versions read, *"twice as much money in their hands,"* ^{BBE} *"twice as much silver with them,"* ^{CEB} and *"double the [grain] money."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was the money they would use to buy grain, returning to their sacks the money that had been returned to them.

AND BENJAMIN

" . . . and Benjamin . . ." Benjamin was placed in the care of Judah, as he had said (Gen 43:8-9). He would be responsible for his safe arrival in Egypt, and return back to Canaan. You may be sure he would not let Benjamin out of his sight, as he did Joseph when he had been thrown into a pit. He had learned enough about his brothers that he did not trust them, to say nothing of possible dangers along the way.



AND WENT DOWN TO EGYPT

" . . . and rose up, and went down to Egypt . . ."

A trip of an estimated two hundred miles. During this trip they had to ensure the safety of what they were carrying, care for the animals, avoid unnecessary entanglements and delays, and be vigilant in maintaining a state of readiness and protection.

All of this makes perfect sense when you are thinking about transporting gifts across a desert where dangers were lurking – not to mention the heat and necessity for finding stations where refreshment could be realized.

It is tragic that more professing Christians do not see the necessity of going through the world in the posture of a pilgrim. What God has given to them must be protected and properly used. What they are going to present to

God must also remain in an acceptable condition, and even increased. These days a lot of Christian leaders major on beginning the trip to glory. Yet, they seem to promote acclimation to the desert rather than anticipation of the appointed conclusion of the journey.

AND STOOD BEFORE JOSEPH

" . . . and stood before Joseph." Other versions read, *"presented themselves to Joseph,"* ^{NIV} *"came before Joseph,"* ^{BBE} *"received an audience with Joseph"* ^{CEB} *"eventually appeared before Joseph,"* ^{ISV} and *"meeting Joseph."* ^{MESSAGE}

After arriving in Egypt, they had to go to the city or location where Joseph could be found. Because they were not the only ones resorting to Joseph for sustenance, they probably had to employ wisdom and tenacity in order to see Joseph. Yet, the Spirit does not bog us down with a lot of meaningless details. He just informs us that the objective of their journey was finally realized, and they stood before Joseph – unaware that they were standing before their own brother.

Something To Be Learned

There is an approach to life that spends an inordinate amount of time on details. It would be similar to delineating all of the experiences and requirements that took place en route to Egypt. It would be much like the Spirit spelling out the kind of inns they found, the climate along the way, and various desert experiences.

There might be some human interest in such details, but they do not have a significant spiritual value. We believers have much more to talk about than the incidentals of life in this world. It is certainly not that such things are wrong, and sometimes are even necessary for the proper care of one another. **Yet, when it comes to the bottom life, it is at last standing before Christ that is the point.** It will be best to have something representing our stewardship to present to Him then.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/15/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The seventieth lesson will cover verses 16 thru of chapter thirty-four: "JOSEPH'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THEIR RETURN." As soon as the brothers arrived and Joseph saw Benjamin, he gave orders to take them to his house and prepare a feast to be served at noon. Then he brought forth Simon, and had them brought to Joseph's house. There his steward gave them water to wash their feet, and fed their donkeys. When taken to Joseph's house, the brothers were afraid because of the money they had returned. They thought Joseph was preparing to make them his bondmen, and add their donkeys to his belongings. They then explained their situation to Joseph's steward. The steward replied that they should not fear – that their God had given them the money. Joseph then had a lavish meal brought to them, providing five times the amount to Benjamin. They then drank and were merry with Joseph. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

“Openings and Introductions” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; “Lead Singing” – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; “Calling” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; “Sermon” = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; “Exhortation” = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; “Table Meditation” = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ’s role in salvation; “Lead Scripture shower” = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; “Lead prayer session” = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; “Lead Intercessory Prayer” = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; “Closing Scripture/Benediction” – Closing of the AM Gathering

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO DURING October, 2013

1. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
2. *Blakely, Jonathan* (Am Table Meditation, Lead AM Singing, AM Sermon).
3. *Blakely, June* (Teach AM Class).
4. *Blakely, Mattie* (Lead AM Singing, AM Calling)
5. *Blakely, Michael* (Play Piano, AM Exhortation, PM Exhortation, PM Sermon, PM Table Meditation).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano,).
7. *Blakely, Paul* (AM Opening Word, PM Introduction).
8. *Blakely, Roxanne* (AM Opening Word).
9. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Calling).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Exhortation, PM Sermon).
11. *Dill, Sarah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Closing Scripture/Benediction).
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Sermon, AM Exhortation, AM Table Meditation, Teach AM Class, PM Table Meditation).
13. *Hutchcraft, Adah* (AM Opening Word, PM Introduction)
14. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead PM Singing, Lead PM Singing, PM Introduction).
15. *Hutchcraft, Debbie* (Play Piano; PM Introduction)
16. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Teach AM Class, AM Table Meditation, AM Exhortation, PM Exhortation).
17. *Hutchcraft, Jason* (AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, PM Introduction).
18. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Play Piano Specials, Read PM Sermon Text, Introduction to PM Sermon).
19. *Hutchcraft, Silas* (Read AM Sermon Text).
20. *Parker, Melissa* (Lead Scripture Shower).
21. *Parker, Tony* (AM Calling, PM Table Meditation).
22. *Sims, Annie* (Lead Scripture Shower, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
23. *Sims, Baylie* (Read PM Sermon Text).
24. *Sims, Hannah* (Lead Scripture Shower, Closing Scripture/Benediction)
25. *Sims, Ricky* (Teach AM Class, Lead AM Singing, PM Exhortation, PM Exhortation).
26. *Sims, Tasha* (Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing).
27. *Williams, Emma* (Read AM Sermon Text).
28. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Calling, AM Sermon, PM Exhortation).
29. *Williams, Levi* (Read Am Sermon Text).
30. *Williams, Logan* (Introduction to PM Sermon).
31. *Williams, Nichole* (Lead Scripture Shower, AM Opening Word).
32. *Williams, Sydnee* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read PM Sermon Text)
33. *Preparing Lord’s Supper* (Various sisters).

THE BODY OF CHRIST

It is a fact: “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him” (1 Cor 12:18). He did not set them in the home, but “in the body.” He did not place them in society, but “in the body.” They are functioning members of the body who fill necessary functions – edifying roles in the solemn assembly (1 Cor 12:19-27). The functioning value and ministry of “the body” is realized when it is “together,” not when the people are separated. The ministry of each member is determined by their faith – “a measure of faith” that has been given to them in order to the “profit” of the entire body (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7). This is how the Lord has put together “the church, which is His body” (Eph 1:22-23). We make no apologies for the ministry of the entire body – publicly, in the assembly, and in order to the edification of the saints. This is all done in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and regard for those who are in Christ Jesus, and who, in faithfulness to God who gave these various abilities. Our assemblies are designed to allow for the various expressions and insightful responses of all who are of honest and good heart, have faith, and are in, and living for, the Lord Jesus.