

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

Vol. 46

April 13, 2008

NO 8

LET US GO ON - 2

(Hebrews Chapter One)

THE ALL - EXCELLING SON OF GOD

I. EXCELLING ALL THE ANCIENT PROPHETS (VS. 1-2)

The Lord Jesus is the final Speech of God; gathering up and transcending all preceding utterances (v. 1) He speaks as the Creator and Heir of all things (v.2).

II. EXCELLING ALL IN HIS REDEEMING WORK (V. 3)

He Himself made a great purging of sin, i.e. "He effected in person the cleansing of men's sin" (Phillips). He then sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.

III. EXCELLING ALL THE MIGHTY ANGELS (VS. 4-14).

This was an excellence recognized and declared throughout the Old Testament Scriptures.

Those Scriptures show Him as surpassing the angels in:

- 1) His Deity (vs. 4-7)
- 2) His Messiahship (vs. 8-9)
- 3) His Creation of Heaven and earth (vs. 10-12)
- 4) His enthronement and ultimate vindication over all His foes (vs. 13,14).

On reading a chapter like this, our hearts sing out, "O what a Christ have I", and there is a Spirit - given impulse to pursue Him, and possess Him, to the exclusion of all else. And that is exactly what the Hebrews were needing to do. The fine traditions of Judaism were again attracting them, and indeed, tending to govern them, but another and fuller sight of Christ would be their basic liberation, enabling them to "forget the things that are behind" (Phil. 3:13,14) and "press toward the mark for the prize". Seeing Him, they would say with Ephraim of old, "What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard Him, and observed Him" (Hos. 14:8).

And such a vision frees us too, and from similar tendencies to drift towards religious externalisms, even in "Christianity" i.e. its mere "actions" and "motions", its traditional procedures, and its public image, etc. As always, it is "the Son" Who sets us free (John 8:36), and then we are "free indeed". Seeing Him, we are liberated from all else, and we begin to sing with Wesley,

"Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee".

Notice that the Christ Who is here portrayed out-spans all time. As to the past, "He made the worlds" and, as to the future, He is the "appointed heir of all" (v. 2). The Father Himself refers to

Him as God" (v. 8) and "Lord" (v. 10), and declares that one day this Son of His would actually wrap up the whole universe as a man might wrap up a discarded garment. Yet, this is the same One Who in His grace "made a purging" of our sins! Brightness of God's glory though He was, and express image of God's person, He nevertheless entered as Man into our vile world, and became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) at Calvary. Then, having finished the work His Father gave Him to do (John 17:4; 19:30), He returned to the glory, and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (v. 3). Indeed, God has spoken to us in His Son. God give us ears to hear such Speech!
(To be contd.)

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

as from HEBRON, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad – 500020, AP, INDIA,

Telephone No. 27613066, 2222008

Date : 22-02-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our risen, reigning, Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath through the Father delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into His own Kingdom. The Lord grant us all grace and wisdom to be steadfast and unmovable, in fulfilling our appointed stewardship and service in His unmovable Kingdom, with reverence and godly fear (1 Cor. 15:20,24,25; Col. 1:12-14; Heb. 12:27 - 29).

The last book of the Bible calls for believers and servants, who will rise above the confusion and deception all around them, overcoming all their temptations and all their enemies. Only the overcomers can be inheritors. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7). Such men must expect to find themselves in bewildering circumstances and painful trials without any human support. They must learn to stand in Christ's victory, and it need be to stand alone. From the day these words were written in the Isle of Patmos, until now, the challenge "to him that overcometh" has continued. Many have failed to meet it but others have prevailed by grace and through faith. There has always been a need for overcomers. Given that we are now in the last days, the need is even more urgent. Now more than ever the Spirit's quest in the churches is for believers, who will be true overcomers.

Perhaps the best illustration of this kind of spiritual victory, at least the best in the Old Testament, is found in the story of Caleb. His name is not mentioned in the New Testament, yet surely he provides an outstanding example of indomitable faith of an individual, who had to live in the midst of prevailing unbelief and defeat. In his days there was complete breakdown of corporate faith. The people of God were divided in their counsels, unwilling to go through with the enterprise which they had started, inconsistent in behavior with their professed knowledge of the will of God, and more concerned with their own affairs than with the honour of the name they bore. Caleb was unmoved by all this. Listen to his own testimony; "... but I wholly followed the LORD" (Joshua 14:8). Listen to Moses' commendation of him; "thou hast wholly followed the LORD" (v. 9). Listen to the divine verdict and the verdict of history - "...because that he wholly on his whole-heartedness, surely Caleb has much to teach us, as to how we also may become overcomers, when defeat is all around us.

Caleb's brethren failed him; he had to follow the Lord alone. "... my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the LORD my God" (v. 8). His brethren ought to have helped him - that is what the brethren are for; but they could not do so for they themselves were half-hearted, faint-hearted, more affected by the voice of reason than by the voice of God. When he spoke of the brethren, Caleb was referring to the other ten spies. We

should say at once that Joshua was, just as whole-hearted as Caleb, so that it was not literally true to say that he was alone - we hardly ever are. Yet there was a real element of loneliness in Caleb's position, for Joshua had special privileges that were not given to him. The other ten failed Caleb because they failed themselves as they failed the Lord. They had the same experiences as Caleb. Like him they shared the vision of the land of fullness, they handled the marvelous fruit of the land and they brought back the same report of its riches. True, they saw the opposition and the difficulties, but so did Caleb. The difficulties were undoubtedly real; they were there alright and what is more, they were still there when the people returned forty-five years later. Difficulties do not vanish with time. They will not disappear because we refuse to face them.

No worthwhile spiritual advance is free from opposition and perils. It is a tragic matter when God's servants become obsessed with difficulties, or so cautious over possible dangers that they do not dare to move forward with the Lord, when His moment arrives. Perhaps the spies heard of dismal stories of how others tried and failed. There always are such stories. Perhaps they considered the weakness of their fellow-pilgrims and judged that they were not yet ready for the strenuous encounters which lay ahead. We do not know the particular and personal reasons for their faint-heartedness. We only know that they said "No!" to the Lord. No, not yet! No, not this way!

These men were thus very negative. They wanted to evade the issue. It was not that they had a suitable alternative, but only that they could not, would not, venture on the Lord. It was in such a general atmosphere of confusion and question that Caleb showed what kind of a man he was. Brethren followed the LORD" (v. 14). With this threefold stress on no brethren, he was determined to be wholehearted in his faith. He could not of course go on literally alone into the land without them. The purposes of God were bound up with the whole people, and not with mere individuals. The unbelief of others could involve him into suffering and delay. But it could not prevent him from wholeness of heart toward his Lord, and he did not let it do so.

His brethren failed. How often we make this the excuse for our own shortcomings! We suggest that we would have trusted the Lord, we would have gone forward, but could not because of lack of support from our brethren. Caleb realized that this would really be no excuse. In the last issue faith is a personal matter. We can never blame those around us for our own failures to trust the Lord. Over against the faint-hearted people or group he could affirm, "But I wholly followed the Lord. I did not excuse myself to be disheartened by their failure. I wholly followed the Lord".

Caleb had no special privileges. Without at all detracting from the faithfulness of his leader, we must point out that Joshua did have peculiar help and advantages. He had already commanded the Israelite army. He also had an intimate privileged association with Moses, and he was marked to be the future leader for His people. None of these things was true of Caleb. He only heard what the others heard and saw what they saw. He represents the ordinary man like most of us. We have no peculiar incentive, no special prominence. We share with others a divine call and vision. God helping, we may continue in our next issue.

Let us thank and praise the Lord for the liberty enjoyed by His messengers in the three day special gatherings in our assemblies, and the ready response to the open air preaching of the Gospel by believers in various places. About 800 from the church at Jehovah-shammah and our branch assemblies participated in the Good Friday Gospel ministry at Tinnanore, 35 kms. from Vepery area. More than 2000 Gospel portions were sold; public meeting was held every evening and many contacts were made. The saints in the church at Bethel, Tinnanore, with the leadership covet our prayers. In Hebron, Hyderabad, Bro. Theodore Reginald enjoyed liberty in the ministry of the Word on Good Friday, when more than 2000 came together.

Please pray for the ministry of the Vacation Bible Schools to be conducted this summer in more than eighty centers in our land, mostly in Andhra Pradesh, as well as special Bible classes for children in about twenty centers.

Praying that having crossed another Easter we may all be granted grace to be true messengers of Christ and Him crucified for the upbuilding of the Church of God, purchased with His own blood, Acts 20:28 1Cor. 15:57,58 Rev.15:2-4

C.R.G.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB - 3
B A K H T S I N G H

In the line of Judah, Jacob's son, the Lord Jesus was born, and through him all the people of the earth have been blessed. God had to take Jacob through bitter experiences to understand how through sufferings we know the Lord's mind. God uses ordinary simple human trials to teach us great spiritual truths, and then we really wonder at God's ways. If you want to master a difficult subject you will go to a well-known university, and learn from a well-known master. If you want to learn about atomic energy you will not go to a Kindergarten school or an ordinary college. You will have to go to a well-known university where there are well-known professors to teach that subject. But the Lord uses simple means to teach us great truths. He will not use our methods and ways. He teaches us through sufferings, trials and hardships that come to us. How much trouble the Lord took to make Jacob a king! He used the barrenness of Rachel and the jealousy of Leah, to teach him many lessons. Also because of the subtlety of Laban he learned many truths of God's Kingdom.

When Jacob was going away from his parents, his heart was full of heaviness and sadness. He did not know what was going to happen to him. But God appeared to him and said, "I am with thee". These simple words carried him through. These words come to us again and again to inspire and encourage us when we are downcast and discouraged. These are times when we are puzzled as to why some things are happening to us. Then remember these words, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest" (Gen. 28:15). God was watching over Jacob the whole time, even though he could not see it, and even though his father-in-law tried to cheat him and his family, the Lord went on making him prosperous to bring him back to the land of promise. The promise of God's presence gives us wonderful protection and it can be gained by any one of us if we are called by God to be His witness, servant and messenger. The Lord will not leave any of us till He has done His full work in us. Jacob knew that unless he came to Bethel he could not be fully blessed. Even though he became very prosperous and wealthy in the house of Laban, God could not bless him there fully. Again on the way, Jacob stayed behind and wrestled with God, but there also God could not bless him fully. Many kinds of temptations to get wealthy and prosperous came to him in the land (Gen. 34:10). But God was saying to him that unless he came back to Bethel he could not receive a full blessing. Many of God's people and servants go away from Bethel. When they are in difficulty they think that by some worldly plans they will be helped. Thus they despise Bethel, and go to some worldly places. In this way many have left God's plan and gone away from God. God was saying to Jacob, "Come back to Bethel with all your difficulties, or you cannot be blessed". When he came back to Bethel, then only all the promises which God had given to him were fulfilled (Gen. 28:15).

Now unless we return to Bethel we will not understand the real meaning of God's dwelling place, and how God wants us to become lasting inheritance. It is by becoming a part of God's heavenly House that we become kings. Then we have the authority of a king and also the privilege to possess God's kingdom. All the promises of God can be fulfilled only as you take part in

the heavenly plan for your personal life, family life and church life.

In Genesis 30 we see the order of the birth of the children of Jacob, who were born with much trouble and anxiety. God was overruling even the names that were given to them, to teach them God's ways and purposes. Later that order was changed and they had to march in a different order. By the order of their birth Reuben was the first, then Simeon, Levi and Judah, then Dan, Naphtali and Gad, Asher and Issachar. But when the children of Israel camped in the wilderness the Lord changed their order completely. Judah had to go first, then Issachar and Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon and Gad, then Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin, lastly Dan, Naphtali and Asher. God uses our human shortcomings and failures to teach us great spiritual lessons. Whatever folly and failures there might be in our past, they can become a blessing when we come into God's order. Someone once had a beautiful and expensive handkerchief. A drop of ink fell on it and spoiled it. When an artist saw it he took a brush and changed the blot into a beautiful design. The very same ugly spot was changed and made the handkerchief more beautiful. That is how God makes use of our failures and shortcomings to make us stronger in Him, when we come into His order.

Through these children of Jacob, God is showing us how we can be strengthened and united to Him as true Levites. The names of Jacob's children are spiritual experiences which we have to go through when we are united to Him. When we come into God's order and God's time we must first begin with Judah which means worship and praise. The second is Issachar which means, God is my hire or God is my wages. We must learn to look to God (Col. 3:23-24), and not to any man for reward. After Issachar came Zebulun (Gen. 30:20), which means dwelling. We have to become the dwelling place of God or God's temple, and part of God's House or Church. If we do not know how to worship God and do every thing as unto Him, or if we do not become His dwelling place then we are not a part of Him.

Then comes Reuben which means seen (Gen. 29:32). God sees our trials and afflictions. here is no need for us to take any action. Then comes Simeon (29:33), which means hearing or God has heard my prayer. As we begin to pray we must realize that prayer has reached God's throne. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24). This is the meaning of Reuben. Believe that God has already heard our prayer and has begun to work on our behalf. After Simeon, came Gad. Gad means an army or troop. The spiritual meaning is that you will see great things in small things. For example, our Lord was intending to go through Samaria for the sake of one woman. By saving that one woman, He was saving the whole of Samaria (John 4 : 4 1 , Acts 8:8). Generally we think in terms of multitudes and crowds but God does great things through small things. After Gad came Ephraim and Manasseh. they were the sons of Joseph.

(TO BE CONTD)

Edited by Bro.K.Phillip, Printed and Published by Bro.G.T.Benjamin for Hebron, Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad - 500 020,
at Chitralipi Printers, 1-1-1/18/1, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad.

Hebron Messenger

Published Fortnightly

VOL. 46

April 27, 2008

NO 9

LET US GO ON - 3 (Hebrews Chapterm Two) GOD'S GREAT SALVATION

I. THE NEED OF PAYING EARNEST ATTENTION TO IT (vs. 1-4).

- 1) Because of the danger of unexpected loss or leakages (v.1 see margin).
- 2) Because of the already demonstrated costliness of carelessness (v.2) (in the case of Israel).
- 3) Because of the superior nature of the messengers (vs.3,4) (i.e. Christ, His followers. and God Himself).

Israel's neglect of earlier announcements made through lesser messengers , was duly penalized (in the wilderness, etc.), so certainly any neglect on our part of a far greater announcement, will also be correspondingly recompensed (i.e. by appropriate disciplines and sad loss of full spiritual reward).

II. THE ACTUAL NATURE OF THIS "SALVATION"(vs.5-10).

In a word, it is man's restored dominion over the universe, - through Christ.

- 1) This was never planned for angels (v. 5).
- 2) It was to be man's heritage (vs. 6,7). (As hinted in Gen. 1:26, and developed in Psa. 8:4-6 and 1 Cor. 15:27).
- 3) Adam (and his posterity) lost it,—by Adam's rebellion (see v.8, last part).
- 4) Christ, as Man, recovered it for us (vs.9,10).
- 5) As "Captain of our salvation" (i.e. File-leader), He now leads those who will follow Him , - via the Cross, to the Throne (see 2 Tim. 2:12, etc.).

III . THE COSTLY PREREQUISITE FOR SUCH A "SALVATION"(vs. 11-18).

It necessitated Christ's willing identification of Himself with created humanity , - In His incarnation.

- 1) This was in view in many Old Testament Scriptures (vs. 11-13).
- 2) This led to the glorious victory of Calvary (vs. 14,15).
- 3) This made possible a fully understanding Priesthood (vs. 16-18).

Next to seeing "The Son" Himself (ch. 1), a "sight" of this "so great Salvation" will surely offset any backward drift, and again spur us to "go on". Very few Christians today really "see" the true greatness of what is being offered to them in the Gospel. It is not only forgiveness (marvelous though that is) ; - it is fullness, - in the divine meaning of that Word. Christ has envisaged us as partners with Him in His Throne (Rev. 3:21, etc.), and He certainly spoke frequently of "giving us the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32; 22:29, etc. See also Matt. 16:18,19). And, as our chapter shows, His disciples and followers confirmed the message (e.g. 1

Pet.2:9; Rev. 1:5,6; Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 6:1-3; Heb. 12:28 etc.). More importantly, God Himself "bore witness" in wonderful ways, even giving His Spirit to make possible kingly living and kingly ministry. Praise God, we are indeed born into a Royal Family, and, even at Now Birth, a Kingly Life enters into us, and we begin to be prepared and trained for our great heritage of dominion. Even Daniel spoke of God's saints "possessing the kingdom" (Dan. 7:18,22, etc.), and this was always God's eternal thought for the sons of men, - secured to us, now, through Christ.

But lest any of us should have wrong ideas and aspirations, the Lord made it abundantly plain that His Kingship is invariably related to servanthood, (-see Matt. 20:18-28 etc.). Certainly we train for this "kingdom" by getting lower, following the declared "example" of our Lord Himself as given in John 13:3-5,15, and likewise the illustration of Abigail, for instance, who showed herself qualified to be a partner of King David by her outspoken willingness to "wash the feet of the servants of her lord" (1 Sam . 25:41,42). How great the need, then, for us, even in these ways, to make our calling and election sure! (2 Pet. 1:10). (To be contd.)

C.R.G.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Hebron, Golconda Crossroads Hyderabad – 500020, A.P., India
Telephone No: 27613066, Date: 11-04-2008.

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who having redeemed us through His own blood as of the Lamb foreordained for us, hath called us to Himself to walk in fellowship with Him as His true and faithful followers. As the followers of the Lamb and fellow-heirs with Him in His Kingdom which cannot be moved, let us seek to be wholly given to Him, as those serving Him in the Levitical realm, and be wholly sanctified, spirit, soul and body, rendering Him acceptable service, with reverence and holy fear (1 Pet. 1:18-20; 1 Cor. 1:9; Heb. 12:28; Num.3:9; 1 Thess. 5:23,24).

It would be profitable for us, the writer and the readers, to continue our meditation on the life and walk of Caleb. Joshua and Caleb were the only true overcomers in their day, to inherit wholly what the Lord had covenanted for the seed of Abraham His friend, in the promised land of Canaan. Though we may not have a place of prominence or peculiar incentives of leadership like Joshua, we share with others in Christ a call and vision, to serve the Lord in His true Church. Even though the vision is realized, we may not occupy any outstanding position. We find even so, in the test of the people of God, we have to face our own individual test.

The whole nation of Israel was on test and it failed. No failure of those around him could excuse Caleb's failure and no general paralysis in the midst of difficulties could be the excuse for him to be paralyzed. Praise God, he was not. He was unmoved and undaunted. His brethren failed, even failed him, but by God's grace he overcame. He saw the same enemies, the same citadels, the same dangers as they saw. He was conscious of his own insufficiency, just as much as they were. But he kept his eyes on the Lord. Let us make no mistake about it: we are all on trial as individual Christians. We may be placed in the midst of confusion and defeat. We may find that the brethren upon whom we ought to be able to rely are not worthy to be trusted, but this cannot excuse our personal collapse. We can be like Caleb, if we will, and because we can, we must.

Not only did the brethren fail him, but the people turned against him. He had to be kept steadily in his faith position, in spite of being misunderstood and criticized by all

around him. Somehow when we follow the Lord, we expect to be appreciated, and perhaps even admired by others. It comes as a shock to find it otherwise. When Caleb found how unreliable the rest of the leaders were, he tried to appeal to the people over their heads. We are told that "Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). But the false leadership of unbelief prevailed over these appeals of his for active faith. It was then that the people turned against Caleb and Joshua. They tried to remonstrate with the people to argue the Lord's case, to show how unreasonable their fears were. "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones" (Num 14:10).

What a strange reception for men who were wholly seeking to follow the Lord! The lack of support now turned to positive opposition and hatred, it must have surprised Caleb to discover how essentially unspiritual these people were, and how capable of having bitterness for the men who sought to bring the truth to them. This is one of the sad discoveries that any man of faith will sooner or later make - this realization of how blinded and impulsive the people of God can be, if once they take their eyes off Him. Only the sudden appearance of the glory of the Lord saved Caleb and Joshua from being stoned to death. If we wholly follow the Lord we need fear no evil consequences, for the Lord will be on our side. It was men who gave the false lead who died. Unbelief always opens the door for some experience of spiritual death. But Joshua and Caleb remained alive. "But Joshua... and Caleb... lived still..." (Num. 14:38). The way of utter faith is the way of life.

The wilderness hardship and rigors also tested him. But Caleb followed the Lord, "while... Israel wandered in the wilderness" (Josh. 14:10). Not only in the moment of crisis and hope, but through all the long years of delay and disappointment, he could claim still to have wholly followed the Lord. In spite of his personal faith he had to wait now, while the nation was divinely disciplined before being brought back to Kadesh Barnea. God helping, we will continue in our next issue.

From the third week of April till the end of May being holidays for schools and educational institutes, the V.B.S. Ministry, Youth Camps, Regional Convocations and Special Meetings are being prayerfully arranged in many of the assemblies throughout the country. Let us pray for the V.B.S. ministry, which is being held in more than eighty centers, for which the necessary kit and teachers, specially sisters, are sent from Hebron.

Pray for the Youth Camps God willing to be held at Hebron from 20th to 25th May, at Bethany, Pune, (Gulmohar Park, Ghorpuri), from 13th to 18th May and at Kurnool from 3rd to 8th June.

Concerning the Regional Convocations and the Special Meetings we mention the following for your prayers and participation if possible. The dates do overlap, but the meetings are being held geographically far apart in a vast country like ours, which is multilingual and multi-regional. Let us pray that they may contribute to the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of the churches. Besides and above all the material needs and preparations connected with accommodation and food etc., the Lord must choose and send His appointed servants and ministers, at such a time as this, when there is so much spiritual need amongst us personally and fellowship-wise.

The believers at Moriah Prayer House, Korba, Chhattisgarh would have us to pray for the Special Meetings in their midst from 24th to 27th April. Pray for the Dedication service of Bethesda Prayer House at Premavathipet, Hyderabad, on 17th April. At Kumbakonam, beyond Trichy, Tamilnadu, the Dedication of their new House of Worship, Hebron, will be

held on 24th April, after a day of prayer for God's servants in Tamilnadu on 23rd April.

Pray for the Holy Convocation at Lucknow from 21st to 25th May. Bro. Ambrose and co-workers covet our prayers for the Convocation at House of Peace, Rajahmundry, to be held in the nearby college premises from 30th April to 4th May. Also God's servant Bro. P. Samson, co-workers and saints of the church at Beersheba, Kadapa, covet our prayers for Regional Convocation, covering Rayalaseema and all near by areas to be held in the nearby college premises (St. Joseph's Junior College, Mariapuram) from 6th to 11th May. Bro. John Subba Reddy and fellow-servants would have us to pray for the Regional Convocation, God willing to be held at Ongole (A.B.M. College promises) from 13th to 18th May. Other similar ministries for the Word of God and the Testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ are also to follow these, or held in between these dates mentioned above. Let us pray for them also.

Bro. P. Nandan Rao, the Lord's servant at Kavali covets our prayers as he is suffering from throat infection.

Praying that a fresh movement of the Spirit to exalt the Son of His love, may be our portion through these and other gatherings to experience Him in a fuller measure, in our lives, families and churches, through our prayers and labors in the Gospel,
John.16:12-15 Zec.4:6,7 Isa.44:2,3,21,22

I remain, Yours in His grace,
K. PHILLIP

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JACOB - 4

B A K H T S I N G H

In Numbers chapter 2 we are given the order in which the children of Israel were to march: Judah (v.3), Issachar (v. 5), Zebulun (v. 7), Reuben (v. 10), Simeon (v. 12), Gad (v.14), Ephraim (v. 18), Manasseh (v. 20), Benjamin (v. 22), Dan (v. 25), Asher (v. 27), Naphtali (v. 29). This was the divine order for their going forward. These names have meanings which speak of spiritual experiences. We have seen six of them in our last issue. Seventhly, Ephraim means fruitful. We become fruitful through all our trials and difficulties. Manasseh means forgetting (Gen. 41:50,51), God says, He will make us forget all our trials. We must learn how to forget all our past trials and failures, and go forward. After Manasseh came Benjamin. Benjamin means the son of my right hand (Gen. 35:18). He was first called Benoni which means "the son of my sorrow", because Rachel died after his birth. But Jacob called him Benjamin, "the son of my right hand". It speaks of power and authority. We learn how to get power and authority through trials and sufferings. After Benjamin came Dan, which means God is my judge (Gen. 30:6). Let God judge those who do us wrong. We need not judge them ourselves. God is our judge. He knows how to take up our cause. After Dan came Asher (Gen. 30:13,14). Asher means happiness; the Lord is my happiness. Not what we are but our Lord Himself is our happiness. Then comes Naphtali, which means wrestling. We also can wrestle on behalf of those who are in any need. Thus God overruled to teach Jacob how he could be strengthened when united with Him.

The time had come when Jacob had to return from Laban to Bethel (Gen. 30:25). But he stayed on longer. Had he returned he would have been saved from further trouble. He allowed Laban to persuade him to stay there longer, rather than obey God and return to Bethel. He listened to Laban and stayed on with him. We see in Gen. 30:30, Jacob is asking Laban; "When shall I provide for my own?" Rather than depending upon God he is depending upon his own cleverness for his prosperity. In chapter 28:15 last part the Lord had said: "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". Jacob had to come back to Bethel to be fully blessed. But he stayed on in the house of Laban rather than return to

Bethel. Even Laban was prepared to give him any wages that he asked, so as to keep him with him, because God had blessed Laban for Jacob's sake. Laban says, "Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it" (Gen. 30:28). It was because of his temptation that Jacob stayed back.

Then in chapter 30:37-42, he adopted a very cunning scheme. Rather than depending upon God he depended upon his own cunningness to become more prosperous. Today also many people depend upon their own cleverness to become prosperous. Because of these delays and disobedience it took Jacob such a long time to come back to Bethel and receive God's full blessing. Though he became prosperous while with Laban, he also became blind spiritually and was full of fear.

When we are born again we do not become superhuman. We have to go through many trials and through these common trials and sufferings, the Lord prepares us for a new vocation. In Gen. 29:34 we read that a son was born to Leah, and she called him Levi, which means "joined unto me or united". In Num. 1:49, we see that the Levites were ordained to be round about the tabernacle and were not numbered with the other tribes. Through Levites the Lord showed His desire and purpose for His people, that they should be joined or united with Him, and that He wanted to live among His people. Through different trials God is showing us how we can be strengthened and joined to Him. God uses different circumstances to show His plan and purpose and to bring us into His divine order.

In Numbers chapter 2, we have the order in which the children of Israel had to camp round the tabernacle. Levi, as we have seen, had to be around the tabernacle. On the east side Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; on the south side Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the west side Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin; and on the north side Dan, Asher and Naphtali. They were not born in this order but they camped in this order. Reuben was the firstborn, then Simon and then Judah, but God changed this order when they marched or camped. We go by our own judgment but God goes by His. "... the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). We have seen how these twelve names show us twelve experiences through which we have to go in order to be strengthened and united with God. God uses our human trials and sufferings to draw us to Him. We may regard our trials as punishments, but God uses them to do a new work in us. God told Jacob to be a prince but it was only after he had gone through difficulties and trials that he began to see this. As long as we are on this earth we have to go through many trials and sufferings, which the people in the world regard as punishment, but we regard as training for our heavenly calling. Once our sins are forgiven we are no longer under condemnation but under a proper training for our heavenly calling.

Now unless Jacob went back to Bethel, he could not receive God's full blessing. He tried to multiply his wealth and do so by his own wisdom, but even though he increased in wealth, he was not happy. Because of Jacob's prosperity, Laban became jealous, and his face was against Jacob. When the Lord told Jacob to go back to Bethel, he did not obey immediately. He went his own way. Even though God spoke to Jacob (Gen. 35:1-3), it took him about 13 years to reach Bethel. Unknown to Jacob, Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's and because of the idols in his house he failed to do the will of God. (To be contd.)

Edited by Bro.K.Phillip, Printed and Published by Bro.G.T.Benjamin for Hebron, Golconda Crossroads,
Hyderabad - 500 020,
at Chitralipi Printers, 1-1-1/18/1, Golconda Crossroads, Hyderabad.