



*the
Golden
Candlestick*

**GOD'S INHERITANCE
OF GLORY IN SONS**

Part 1

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THE GREAT BACKGROUND OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“... having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Eph. 1:5-6).

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20-21).

“The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:16-23).

The ultimate issue of the glory of God

Although we are not going to dwell in the letter to the Ephesians, you will have noted that the two passages which we read represent the beginning and the end of God’s full intention and purpose for this creation. The beginning takes us right back before the world was — “... having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself”. The second passage takes us right on into the ages of the ages — “unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto the ages of the ages”. So far back and far on; the purpose of God is seen in conception, initiation, and far on in realisation

and consummation. In between comes that section which we read from the letter to the Romans, and what a great deal is between the beginning and the end, the conceiving and the realisation, what a vast amount is crowded in between the great parenthesis. The people of God with all their experiences of trial, difficulty, adversity, suffering and sorrow and doubts, questions, fears and failures, the whole story of the trials of the people of God, apart from everything else, fills in between “foreordained ... unto adoption” and the realisation of that adoption. But the thing which is said to horizon that whole range of time and all those experiences as a great encompassment of all, governing, ruling and most certainly being the issue of all is said to be glory, and the glory of God manifested in sons, or in terms of sonship. The people of God who in all ages do know that the way of fellowship with God, the way of the life of God, the way of the Lord is a difficult way; what Paul calls here “the sufferings of this present time”. They are very real and very personal but nevertheless said to be governed by ultimate glory, and all these experiences, trials, and difficulties, which you and I know in measure, and the people of God have known all through the ages, need an adequate explanation, they need an adequate reason. They need to have an adequate issue, they need to be justified. When we are passing through our difficult times — and when are we not? — one thing which arises in our hearts is the question: ‘Is this worthwhile? Is this justified? Is there a good enough reason for an explanation of it?’ We must have it all set within the framework of an adequate justification.

And that is exactly where the apostle puts it: “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.”

Now, while that becomes something for us, our hope, our inheritance, that is not the place where the emphasis is going to be placed in this series of messages. The emphasis is going to be placed upon the glory of God, not, however much it may be true, our glory, but the glory of God, God reaching His own glory. And it is here made so clear that it is along the line of sonship. Ultimately, it is the manifestation of the sons of God which issues in the reign of eternal glory, which brings in the fulness of God’s glory in the church by Christ Jesus. That is what it is all unto — God’s glory manifested universally in sons.

A foretaste of glory now

And may I say here, lest it should seem to you to be too remote as belonging to something called the ages of the ages lying in the future, that it

is not all that. If that is to be the ultimate and consummate issue of all God's purpose, there should be foreshadowings of it and foretastings of it now. In the separate, individual, partial experiences of trial and adversity, there should be an issue of the glory of God. We should be knowing that now. It has been so. Again and again, countless times, the people of God have felt that the situation in which they were placed was utterly impossible of having any glory. It may have been long-drawn-out, but eventually they have been able to see the glory of God in the situation and magnify the Lord. Do you think that the Lord wants all His glory stored up to some future? Surely not! The church exists now, and although the fulness of His glory will be then, He would manifest that glory as a foretaste and a foreshadowing even now.

Of course, a great deal depends upon our mental conception of glory, but if I just put it like this, in an expression, a spontaneous heart expression of 'Praise the Lord!' that is glory. If after a bad time, a difficult time, an impossible time 'Praise the Lord' can come from our hearts, that is glory, and that is the glory of God. And, believe me, that is how it will be in the great, vast concourse of the redeemed at last who have known what it is to go through great tribulations. They will together with one heart and one voice be saying, 'Praise the Lord!' and that will be His glory.

We have said that the all-encircling purpose is sons for His glory, beginning with God's eternal Son known to us as Jesus Christ our Lord, who was appointed, we are told, heir of all things (Heb. 1:2). God ever had Him in view, and has ever kept Him in view as His Son, the destined heir of the universe, the heir of all things. And then passing from the Son to a people in Christ, encircled by Christ, as co-heirs, according to our reading — "joint-heirs with Christ", co-heirs with Him.

The appointment of the Son as Heir

This inheritance of the Son and the sons is said to be the divine motive and object in creation. Let us read one or two passages at this point, going back to the book of Job chapter 38. Remember that before we reach this point in the book of Job, Job had laboured hard to vindicate himself and to overpower his opponents by declaring that he also had wisdom and knowledge and understanding, but at last the Lord comes to Job and says: "Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me" (Job 38:3). 'Let us know all about this wonderful wisdom and knowledge that you have claimed to have.' And then to the end you notice it is a long series of interrogations which put Job completely out of court and make it very clear to him that he does not know anything at all. But the point is this

— ‘Job, do you know about My eternal counsels, for it is in the realm of My eternal counsels that true wisdom and knowledge are found.’ “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding ... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4,7). ‘What do you know about that? Tell me, what do you know about that?’

Leave that for a minute and come to the New Testament. Let us get right to the end, the book of the Revelation. “Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created” (Rev. 4:11). “And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth. And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for every and ever” (Rev. 5:9-13).

You will note that those passages have to do with creation. A question arises which is of considerable interest and significance as to that passage in Job. “When I laid the foundations of the earth ... the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Leaving out, of course, now all those questions which have arisen as to who the sons of God were, the question is this — what was happening? What was the occasion? The statement is that the morning stars sang together. I do not think that means the literal stars in the heavens. According to Scripture everywhere, stars are intelligences, they are heavenly bodies, persons of considerable eminence and power, and they come alongside of the sons of God. When the foundations of the earth were laid — that is the point — all these heavenly, celestial intelligences, sang together and shouted for joy. What was happening? What was it all about? The question with me is, Was that a celebration of what we have in Hebrews 1:2: “Whom he appointed heir of all things”. When did He appoint His Son heir of all things? Is this the clue? — when He laid the foundations of the earth, for in Colossians 1 we read that through Him, by Him and unto Him were all things created, things in heaven, things in earth.

When the foundations of the earth were laid, was there a celebration of the appointment of the Son as heir of all things? Was that the introduction of this great divine conception of sonship, that along that line of sonship ultimately this great universe which was being brought into being should be filled with the glory of God? I do not answer the question dogmatically and say that it was, but it seems to me that it might well have been. All the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy — a mighty, heavenly celebration of the appointment of God’s Son as heir of all things, and I think before we are through these messages, we shall see that that has a good deal to bear it out.

We leave it for the moment, but you see the point. Right back there, as far back as that when Christ was chosen and appointed heir of all things, we were foreordained unto adoption as sons by Jesus Christ unto the *praise* of His glory. They sang, they shouted, and we were foreordained unto His praise, the praise of His glory. Wonderful outlook, is it not? Is that not an adequate setting for everything? But that is where it begins, this great intention of God.

God’s reaction to His arrested purpose

But then there comes the arrested purpose, that interlude and parenthesis, which is summed up in those verses which we read from Romans 8. Adam, the representative of God in this creation, handing over the inheritance to an enemy, and all that followed that, the glory veiled, the glory withdrawn, the glory made impossible on that line, and on that ground, and yet the glory reserved. We have that great period from Adam to Christ, but God through that very period acting and reacting to the situation, while “the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope”. Glory reserved, but subjected to vanity so that a creation with sin in it and evil in it and the devil in it should never reach glory. The Lord began a line along which He was going to reach His end, and we have a long series of individuals who touched the glory, or who were touched by the glory, and if you look closely and carefully into their lives in relation to God you will see that they were heirs of the kingdom, heirs of the glory, and were being dealt with on the principles of sonship. That covers a lot. Abel was being dealt with as an heir of the glory on the principles of sonship. So with Noah. So with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph. The individuals were marked down in relation to this glorious end, and were dealt with, as the apostle puts it in the letter to the Hebrews, as sons (Heb. 12:7). We are dealt with as with sons. We shall see what that means later.

Then from the individuals we come to the nation for the inheritance, a nation for God's inheritance, for God's glory, chosen from among the nations, that He should be glorified in them. How often the Lord spoke of Israel as His peculiar treasure. Looked at naturally, you would not say that of them any more than you would of the rest of us. What value is there in us, what value was there in Israel naturally? Why should the Lord speak of Israel as His peculiar treasure, something tremendously precious to Him? Just for this reason, that in their case as in ours there was the very best ground provided for getting glory to Himself, and He will never get that if there is glory in the thing itself. The nation: but how that nation was dealt with again on the principles of sonship. "I called my son out of Egypt" (Hosea 11:1). "Let my son go" (Ex. 4:23), said the Lord to Pharaoh, and He was dealing with them on these spiritual principles of sonship, that He should eventually and progressively be glorified.

And then we come in the Old Testament to a large section of prediction, that which is pointing on all the time beyond the present to the future, the prediction of another coming One, a Son, prediction of another coming elect on this same principle, and then Christ Himself comes, the Son, the heir. And does not that dark world recognise very clearly that He is the heir? We have often pointed out that there was a knowledge, an intelligence, a spiritual perception lying behind that parable or story told by the Lord against the opposers of Himself as God's Son, those who would not have Him as the Son of God and those who would not have Him as the heir. He told the story of a man who had a vineyard and let it out unto husbandmen, and went away. At the time when things should have been forthcoming, He sent His servant, and they stoned him, cast him out, and He sent another and they treated him badly and stoned him. At last He said, 'I have one Son, I will send Him'. And God sent His Son, and what did they say? They saw Him and they said, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours" (Mark 12:7). Oh, the Lord Jesus knew what He was talking about! He was talking right through men to this sinister power which actuated them, knew Him to be the heir, the Son, and provoked them to kill Him with a view to taking the inheritance. You see, the inheritance is bound up with Him, the Son.

And then, when He has redeemed it and secured it, He brings in His church (as individuals) to be His co-heirs. "As many as received him, to them gave He the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Paul adds to that: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). "Foreordained ... unto adoption as sons". And then collectively a family of children, and "Now unto Him be the glory

in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever.” Do you catch some glimpse of what God is after?

An adequate conception of the Christian life

What is your conception of the Christian life? Have you got an adequate setting for being the Lord’s? Thank God that we are saved. It is a good thing to be saved from hell, from judgment, doom, the guilt and penalty of sin. It is a good thing to be assured that one day we will go to heaven, whatever that is and wherever that is. No one seems to be able to define what they mean when they say they are going to heaven. However, it is a good thing to have that assurance, and other things that accompany it. But is that adequate? It is good, but it is not the setting of the Christian life given to us in the word of God. Those are only things which go towards the main thing. You will not get through your trials, afflictions, sufferings and adversities unless you have an adequate explanation of them, and God has given that. Oh, how wonderfully full is His unveiling in His word, of the meaning of it all. How great it is to be a child of God, called unto His eternal glory, that God, the God of glory, should manifest His glory in you and me eventually, and is working on that line now, dealing with us as with sons. It is no small thing. I say again, have you got an adequate conception of what it means to be a Christian? We have very rebellious hearts, we have a very difficult nature, and I think I have that more than most people. The capabilities of this heart are very great and very terrible, and under threats, suffering, affliction and adversity and in the great problems which arise in the Christian life, again and again the question has presented itself — is it worth it? Is there a sufficient justification for the Lord to deal with us in this way? Why should the Lord allow this and that to come into our lives, to form part of our brief sojourn here? We want a very big answer to that Why, because the situations are to us very big. They are very real and sometimes very terrible, and if we have not got a big enough answer, I am afraid we might throw our salvation to the winds. Forgive me for saying that if it is wrong. We might feel we just cannot go on, we must give it all up unless there is something that makes it worthwhile, justifies these afflictions, and that is why I have always tried to impress upon you the immensity of the background in which we are set as the people of God. It is no little salvation, no little Lord. No, we demand something tremendous as the justification of this way, and here it is. “Foreordained unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself” — that is the beginning. And the end — “Unto Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever.” Is that enough? God breaking forth in this universe in all His

glory by way of us, by way of sons, and that being the signal for the release and deliverance of the whole creation from that ban. For the creation is under a ban of vanity, never getting through, striving, groaning, travailing, but nothing coming of it, just failing at last, and the removal of that, the breaking out of the whole creation into glory where nothing fades, dies, falls, perishes or sees corruption. Where death, shadows and fears are no more, but everything is eternally alive. The signal for that is when God has got His sons in company, complete. Waiting for our redemption, our adoption. The whole creation hangs upon you and me. The whole creation, for God's vindication, waits upon the result and the issue of God's dealings with you and with me, among many others. A tremendous thing is hanging upon this. And if you say that is too big, too high, bring it down to simple everyday application, and you know it is true.

God takes you in hand over something. God brings you into trial, difficulty, suffering and adversity. You go through a dark and difficult time. Now then there are two ways. You can revolt, you can rebel, you can become bitter, you can turn in your spirit, in your heart, against the Lord, and become stubborn, recalcitrant. Have you ever done that? Is there any glory down that way? You know that is the way of darkness and death, and if you have done that a few times you have learned not to do it so quickly next time. You say, 'I have been down that street before; I know where that leads.' Take the other course. 'Lord, this is a bitterly difficult time and situation, the whole condition of things is so contrary to what I expected, I in myself am disappointed and this is a terrible thing, but Lord you know what you are doing, and you are going to bring glory out of this.' If we really get through that, what happens? It is glory at once, and we can say:

*“Heaven above is softer blue,
Earth around is sweeter green;
Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen.”*

Somehow or other, the world seems a different place when you get through with God on a situation, and it is glory, it is a foretaste, maybe small, but it is there. It works down to periodic experiences, but take the cumulative, the whole, bring out all the sufferings of all the people of God through all the ages, how great the glory must be and what an emancipation of this universe. Paul says that is how it will be after God gets His sons, and they are manifested. At present they are hidden, they are in secret, no one knows them, they only know one another in spirit. “The world knoweth us not” says John “because it knew Him not” (1 John 3:1). They are hidden, but

God is dealing with us in this hidden way, in this deep and secret way. The Spirit of sonship is working in us developing sonship by trial and adversity. It is going on in the great multitude, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and then the signal, the time has come, the moment has struck for the manifestation of those sons, and with that manifestation the creation itself is delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glory of the children of God.

The Lord help us by this word for the time being, giving us some little glimpse of the great horizon of God in which we and His people are set.

DAVID AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE MEANING OF SONSHIP

“And Jesus, when He was baptised, went up straightway from the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon him; and lo, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16-17).

“...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him” (Matt. 12:17-18).

“...to the praise of the glory of His grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6).

“Put on therefore, as God’s elect, holy and beloved ...” (Col. 3:12).

We are occupied with God’s inheritance of glory in sons. We read in the previous chapter passages of Scripture relevant to that. You will have noticed that the verse preceding Ephesians 1:6 indicates that — “foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself ... to the praise of the glory of His grace”. And then immediately it goes on to speak of our acceptance in the Beloved, which means our acceptance in Christ, the beloved Son. So it is that the universe is horizoned by this one object. God has, so to speak, thrown around this universe a horizon, and that horizon is His glory in sonship. We are going to seek to get nearer to that, taking a further step inward at this time.

We turn to the book of the Revelation to help us in this movement. You know that this book of the Revelation is pre-eminently wonderful for one reason, that it gathers into itself the whole Bible. It is not a very great book so far as pages are concerned, but it is a very great book in the sense that it has within its quite brief compass the whole Bible. It is the book of inclusion. The Old Testament is referred to definitely some twenty-eight times in this little pamphlet, but that does not convey everything. If you were to look at those

twenty-eight references, you would find that each one of them represented a very great deal of the Old Testament. Then it is the book of conclusion, that is, that while it gathers up into itself the whole of the Old Testament, it brings all that has gone before to a conclusion. It is the book of consummation. This is the end of all that that has been, and this is how it works out. And then it is the book of realisation. Here we have spiritual and literal fulfilment of all that has gone before.

I wonder if you have noticed that the last lines of that book gather the Old Testament together in a very remarkable way. In verse 19 we read the summing-up words of everything: “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life ...”. That links the end with the beginning. Here the closing words of the Bible link on with the book of Genesis right at the beginning — “the tree of life”. And then again in verse 16, the second part of the verse: “I am the root and the offspring of David.” That takes us right into the centre of the Old Testament and throws back from that to all that had gone before, and leads on to all that follows.

“The root and offspring of David”

This is a remarkable statement, and it is a very significant word. “I am the root and the offspring of David.” It is remarkable that it should be almost the final statement of the Bible. What does it mean? Well, “I am the root of David” means that all that David signifies and implies comes from Christ. David derives his significance, his value, his meaning, his everything, from Christ. Christ is his root. Well then, Christ must go a long way back if He is the root of David. All that led up to David came from Christ. That means Christ is God’s eternal Son. “The offspring of David” means that Christ takes up into Himself all that David ever signified, inherits all that David represented, and that is no small thing. Christ is David’s inheritance. David is Christ’s inheritance. Those words in Luke 1:32: “the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of his father David.” Those words get very near to this matter in the last chapter of the Revelation. David has a large place in the New Testament, for he is referred to by name in the New Testament no fewer than forty-seven times, but then in addition to that there are all the quotations from David, from his Psalms, in the New Testament. And if again you look at all those references to David in the New Testament, you will find that they contain in themselves a very great deal indeed. The statements about David in the New Testament are tremendous, sometimes breathtaking. So we must look to see what David is in order to get to this matter of God’s inheritance of

glory in sons. That necessitates the reading of some other passages, and it is all about David: “Which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, that God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of *David*; who *found favour in the sight of God*, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob” (Acts 7:45-46). “When he had removed him (that is, Saul the son of Kish), he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will” (Acts 13:22). “Then thou spakest in vision to thy saints, And saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: with whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact from him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him” ... “It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as the faithful witness in the sky” (Ps 89:19-37).

David the beloved

Now, what is the point? First of all, the meaning of his name. The name ‘David’ means ‘Beloved’. “Who found favour in the sight of God”, “a man after my heart”. You can already hear something leading to “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17); “... made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6 A.V.). David, by his very name, is a pointer to God’s Son and by his very name links in with this matter of sonship where the glory of God is going to be found universally.

David the anointed

But that is not the only link with Christ. Have you noticed that the first time that David’s name is actually mentioned is in connection with the Holy Spirit coming upon him? “Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16:13). The first mention of his name is connected with the Spirit of God coming upon him. You notice that the first time that the Lord Jesus is called the Beloved was when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. “This is My beloved Son”. ‘I have chosen David’, said the Lord, “with my holy oil have I anointed him” (Ps. 89:20). The chosen and the anointed of God on the basis of sonship, and when that happens, destiny is settled, and what a destiny! Things are just bound to happen.

Everything moves to David

Everything will most certainly move towards that one. Whoever may have drawn away and for a time held something other than on that divine basis of sonship will have to let it go; they will just have to let it go. It will be taken from them and it will all move in a transition towards the one chosen and anointed of God. Do you see how that happened with David? Even in the day when he was chosen and anointed, Samuel was not disposed to think that David was the one. David's brothers came before Samuel, these men evidently of great stature and fine physique who were obviously men of war in the natural sense. As they passed before Samuel one by one and he came to one more outstanding than all the others, he said in his heart, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me" (1 Sam. 16:6). He was wholly disposed towards that one, and would have been disposed, I take it, towards any of the others before David. But the Lord said, 'This is not he.' "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." It seemed that all the brothers had passed before Samuel and he was left with a question. 'What is the meaning of this? I was told that it was in the house of Jesse that I should find the man of God's choice. The house of Jesse has passed before me, and the Lord will not let me do anything about anyone of them.' And so he turned to Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" Jesse said, 'Well, there is another one, I did not think it worth bringing him, he is the youngest, he is looking after the sheep. We thought that any of these would come before him.' Samuel said, "Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither." When David came, the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he", and Samuel had to make a transition from all others to David. He was God's chosen and in heaven he was God's anointed, and everything had to move to him.

And from Samuel onward this course of transition took place in all directions. Presently some men of Israel will join David. Movement will begin, movement towards David. Sooner or later his own brothers had to join David. They were clearly not favourable to him, indeed they were very angry with him and had no place for him. They said, 'What have you done with those few sheep? You go back and look after them. Your place is there, not here' (1 Sam. 17:28). There had to be this transition to David. I am not going to point you to the Scriptures, but there is one Scripture which definitely says that one of the brothers of David was mentioned in connection with David's wars.

And then it was almost like a landslide. All Israel began to turn from Saul to David, and although Saul himself was David's greatest enemy, and

most bitterly against him, he was compelled to utter the words that David was God's anointed. "I know that thou shalt surely be king" (1 Sam. 24:20), said Saul. Here is everything in transition, moving towards David, the beloved of God.

Do I need to follow that through with the still greater Beloved? — the anointed, the chosen and the anointed of God, His dearly-beloved Son. You just cannot stop it. There is a movement in heaven towards Jesus Christ, God's Son. God has fixed the destiny of this universe in Him. God has determined to have all glory in His creation in Christ, and it has just got to be. Men have done everything in their power to stop the dry rot of their kingdom, but what happens? The more they persecute, the more they grow. The more they stand in the way, the more God goes on in spite of them. The Lord Jesus was forsaken, smitten, buffeted, spat upon, mocked. They cried: "Away with Him, crucify Him." They ushered Him by sheer force to the cross and pierced Him. That is one side of the story. But He was God's anointed, and that is the other side, and so today there are countless numbers who have been with Him through the generations, waiting for the day. They have gone from this earth. There is a great multitude on the earth, and we trust there will be many more added day by day, but it is a tremendous transition. And if we want any argument at all, we have only got to look at history in relation to Christ, any argument that in the end God is going to get glory to Himself through His Son.

But let us come back to David. Saul and all with him were in a carnal condition when David was anointed. We know the meaning of Saul, man's idea of rulership, of kingship; man's choice, something in which man glories, of which man boasts, the natural man, and all Israel was in a very carnal state, for Samuel said to the Lord, 'They have asked them a king like the nations.' And if we want anything more utter concerning their carnality, it is the reply of the Lord: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me" (1 Sam 8:7). That is the state of things. Saul then, and all with him, represent the carnal man in relation to divine things, with a hand upon the things of God. David is a man of the Spirit, the spiritual man, who is the rightful heir to the things of God. One takes possession for himself and his own glory and satisfaction. That is Saul. David came into possession for the glory of God, and that is the key to David's life. You may have a lot of things against David. You may ask a lot of questions about David. There are those black spots in his life. You may wonder why God committed Himself to David as He did, why God made so much of David in view of those things. The answer is that David had a heart for God and "the Lord looketh on the heart", and God can do wonderful things when it is like that. That is only

another way of saying 'a man of the Spirit', for a man of the Spirit has heart for nothing else and no one else but God, and certainly not for himself.

David's separation from Saul and his house

But note, this transition and this ascendancy of David ran along parallel with David's separation from Saul and his house. That separation did not take place all at once. It had a quiet beginning and it was very gradual, but it was very sure. This is a very important and significant thing to note, this movement which began in David's life away from the house of Saul. It seemed slow, but you can see it taking on strength, becoming more and more defined until the complete break with the house of Saul was made, and God attested David by this transition. One thing after another falling to David ran parallel to that separation from the house of Saul. The more David became separated from the house of Saul, the more the Lord attested him, the more the Lord added to him. Have you noticed that in the life of David? When the last break came, then David came into his full position.

The house of Saul, as we have said, is carnality. It is the flesh, it is the natural man touching and handling the things of God. Oh, no, it is not the world, it is not the unsaved. It is the people of God, but the people of God in a worldly position, a worldly state, the people of God who are keeping up the religion, but it is just form, not of the Spirit. They are maintaining a certain form of things, the tradition, the history, but they are not in harmony with it by the anointing. There is all the difference between a Christianity that is traditional, historical and institutional, and a Christianity that is anointed with the Holy Spirit. You know the difference, I am sure, between those two things. You can meet people who can say they are Christians. You say, Are you a Christian? Yes, I am a Christian, do you think I am a heathen? But you do not meet the Lord. You have no sense that they know the Lord, you do not realise that the greatest thing about a Christian is that here is one in whom the Lord is. You meet the Spirit of Christ here, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of light, the Spirit of love and the Spirit of power. Yes, and you can go further and be very religious in your form, your going to church, and your taking Holy Communion and your going through certain other rites, yes, all that in a very devout way. There was something of that in Israel in the days of Saul, and yet the anointing was not there, the Spirit of God was not there, the Lord was not there; He had left it and He had left Saul. Now David must leave it, and only as David does leave it and stands clear of that carnal state will the Lord work out this destiny and cause things to pass to him.

Do you notice something like that happened with the church at the beginning? In the beginning, the first days of the church's history as we have it in the book of the Acts, we do not find an instant and complete break with the old tradition. Some were still clinging to the temple, and to some of the feasts and the rites of Judaism. It was not until by slow and gradual movement at last that they took spiritual ground and repudiated Judaism as such, historical, traditional and institutional religion as such, and took the ground of Christ wholly, that the Lord set His full seal on them. You can see the movement from Jerusalem, from Judaism, from the old ceremonies, the movement to Christ. The letter to the Hebrews is the great document of that transition.

Now you see with David there had to be separation from that in which Satan had a footing, and that was religion. An evil spirit came upon Saul, that is the devil, a foothold of Satan in that system. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David and David had to come out where the Spirit of the Lord was in utterness. And as that went on gradually and steadily, but most surely, things moved to David, and he was shown to be God's beloved, God's chosen.

David's history repeated in every son

Now these are things inseparable from God's glorious inheritance in sons. There must be first of all a recognition of our election. The apostle makes so much of that, telling us that we were elect, we were chosen in Christ. There must be a recognition of this and an acknowledgment and acceptance of it, that we are the Lord's by His own sovereign act of choice, and of coming into line with that. The Lord is our owner. He has chosen — oh, mystery of mysteries that He should have done it, but there it is — He has chosen. That is an essential thing, in the long run, to His glorious inheritance.

Anointed: the Holy Spirit, when He got hold of men in New Testament times made them exceedingly particular about this matter. When people turned and professed to have come to Christ, and were said to have believed, these Holy Spirit filled and governed men would not just accept it as report. Neither would they accept it as just an attitude or a statement of the people concerned. They went where it happened to make sure, by taking care that these people did really, in an act, receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knew what He was doing. His great inheritance, God's great inheritance of glory, is only in anointed people, those who have received the Spirit of God, and you may be a professing believer and say you are that, but the question is, 'Have you received the Holy Spirit?' Paul was meticulous about that. When he came to Ephesus and found certain disciples, he said, "Did ye receive

the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” (Acts 19:2). Now, this is not just some doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The whole destiny of the church hangs upon this, and the whole inheritance of God in glory hangs upon it, whether you and I are spiritual people, made so by having been born of the Holy Spirit and having received the Holy Spirit. Just settle it here that as a child of God called to sonship, you must be in the position to say, ‘I know I have received the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is in me.’ It is your birthright, and it is God’s right to His inheritance in you.

And then separation from all that in which Satan has a footing. That is essential to the ultimate glory, and the glory of God will be progressive according to our separation from all that is carnal, sensual, and, as the apostle adds, devilish or demonised. Now immediately after David was anointed, what happened? He had to meet the devil. He was anointed. Now there is a history going on in the unseen. This is not all written in the record of David’s life, but there is something going on and you can see the spiritual movement as from behind. David is anointed. The evil spirit has come to Saul. Those two are going to be brought together before long with a clash. On the one side, Saul, possessed and governed by this demon, this devil, marks down David. Presently he will try to kill him with his javelin. The battle is set. That very anointing has precipitated this. It is a part of the anointing. It is the issue of the anointing. The beloved is on the field, the beloved of God. Immediately after Jesus received the Spirit and the attestation — “This is my beloved Son” — he was led into the wilderness with the devil. The battle is joined, the conflict in the unseen has started because of the anointing.

The antagonism of Satan

And from Saul it will move out to Goliath. That anointing will meet that full development of antagonism, to God as represented by Goliath, for he was a representative and an inclusive one. All the enemies of the Lord were summed up in Goliath. Kill Goliath, and the Philistines will flee. While Goliath remains alive, then Israel is in terror and paralysis rests upon the hosts of the Lord. This anointed one must move out, and by the anointing he moved out against Goliath.

But my point is this — here is the parallelism between David and Christ, the two Beloveds. By that very election and anointing, Christ moves out to the kingdom of Satan. Perhaps we ought to take more note of this and more comfort from it. We never do. We always feel bad, we always have a little grumble about it that, when there is something to be obtained in relation to God’s inheritance of glory, some more glory for the Lord, then the conflict

gets going. We know it, we notice it. Something is to be obtained and we know it very largely because of the activity of evil powers. In all sorts of ways the battle is on. Oh, if only we could and would, that is a very good sign. There is something coming to the glory of God. God is going to come into his inheritance, and we are brought into the battle of this ultimate thing — God's glory in sonship.

You see, Satan then recognized what was involved with David, and he certainly all the more recognized what was involved in Christ, and he recognises what is involved in the church — nothing less than his own kingdom, his whole system, his whole place, his whole power. That is involved where the anointing is and where, by the anointing, God's glory is the issue. Yes, Satan knew all about David and what he represented, what he signified, how far-reaching he was. Satan knew all about it, and that dear man David had to go through it, to fight for the thing that was in his heart — the glory of God. And you must remember, however much you condemn David for certain things in his life, however badly we may feel about those things, and however sorry and grieved and perplexed, we must remember that the more a man stands for the glory of God, the more he is the target of the devil. There is a concentration of evil forces upon those who stand for this great issue, God's inheritance, to catch them, to trip them up and to break them down which other people know little of. Always remember that with David. He may have been weak and faulty, but that was not all. Hells combined to shatter that man if possible and take advantage of his weak moments, as those evil powers always do.

The snare of Satan

And sometimes the snare. Saul sought to get a footing with David in his kingdom by his daughter Michal. He offered his daughter Michal in marriage to the man who slew that giant. See that snare. You follow through the history of Michal and see what a snare, what a thorn in David's side she was, and how in the end the Lord had to bring a curse upon Michal. She was a very instrument of Satan in David's life to ensnare, and if the devil cannot get by open and loathesome means, he will do it by subtlety and subterfuges.

So he comes to the greater Beloved, and says, showing Him all the kingdoms of the world — “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matt. 4:9). His aim was to get a foothold for his kingdom in the Beloved. He is always doing that sort of thing. In some way he will try to circumvent this great issue of God's glory.

We will go on perhaps later. David a great son, his name is Beloved. Christ taking up all that David signifies as a still greater Beloved, all that David signifies taken up in Christ, the offspring of David, and then the church brought in, accepted in the Beloved One and called the beloved of God. It is a wonderful thing that that name, that designation resting upon David and then upon Christ should pass to us, but it is not just a term of endearment, a pretty phrase — “beloved of God”, “beloved of the Lord”, “dearly beloved”. It is something of immense significance. It implies nothing less than that it is with the beloved of the Lord that God’s inheritance of glory rests. By these beloved sons in the Beloved Son, God is having His heritage of glory. Yes, we come back to the beginning. The universe is horizoned and circled by this One, that the glory of God is ultimately manifested universally through sonship. It means what we have been saying. David is a great illustration of the meaning of sonship, both as to its demands and as to its experiences. We have not touched David’s life, we have only just begun. What a history David had — for this reason that the glory of God was so much bound up with him. Oh look again, yes, we are going to look again at David and see what glory came to God through that man, and then you see, well, that is the thing bound up with sonship, standing in the position of the beloved. But look what is required. This recognition of the sovereign choice of God, this absolute essential of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, this necessity for a gradual inward separation from the old natural life until it is final. And as to experience, rejected, cast out, embattled, frustrated, persecuted, pursued, cast down and much more, all in the way of the glorious inheritance of God. And David, after all, is only a faint shadow of the greater Son, the Lord Jesus, who knew more of that sort of thing than David did, but who gave God the uttermost separation unto His will. Of David the Lord said “who shall do all my will”. Ah, but David’s doing of the will of God was a small thing compared with the way the Lord Jesus did it. “Obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8).

DAVID AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE MEANING OF SONSHIP (CONT.)

Reading: Ephesians 1:5-12

God's glory ultimately displayed and manifested in sons — that is what is before us — God's heritage of glory in sons. God has a great heritage; that heritage He has vested in a people; that people, by His foreordaining, stand related to Him as sons in His Son Jesus Christ. From that comprehensive horizon of God's intention, we seek to see something of the meaning of how God reaches that end, and what therefore sonship means.

In the previous chapter we were occupied with David. In this connection David's name means Beloved, chosen, anointed, attested by God, pointing on to a greater than David, God's own beloved Son.

David's life and history realised in his son Solomon

Now we shall continue in that connection, and I have only to remind you that the whole life and history of David was realised in his son Solomon. There came a point at which this whole matter of sonship arose in a very definite and precise way with David in relation to Solomon, and David's whole life passed over to Solomon and had its fulfilment in Solomon. Solomon is the proverbial figure in the whole Bible for glory. He is the synonym of glory, magnificence, wealth, majesty, fulness, everything that speaks of what is consummate. But Solomon does not stand by himself. Solomon, after all, is only the fulfilment of David's whole life. Solomon's heritage was the heritage of his father David. The Lord Jesus when He was here on earth speaking of Solomon's greatness, Solomon's glory, Solomon's wisdom, said, "A greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. 12:42). So Solomon represents three things: sonship, glory and Christ. In those two things he foreshadows Christ, but is only a shadow. A shadow passes, Christ remains. A shadow reflects, Christ is that which is reflected. A shadow is something quite intangible. Christ is very tangible. But David has a lot to say to us yet on this matter of sonship and glory and what sonship means. We now take another fragment this evening, because David was the embodiment of a very great deal himself.

David halfway between Abraham and Christ

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham ... So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations” (Matt. 1:1-17). So David stands halfway between Abraham and Christ and is a terminal point in that long history; that is, he takes up into himself everything from Abraham and passes it all on to Christ. It is a tremendous sweep. And genealogies end with Christ. There is no one after him. He is the sum of all, the end of all. All that history comes to its climax and its consummation in Christ. But, as we said, David stands halfway, and David looks back, gathers up all the life and the history of the chosen people and becomes the embodiment of all that history, and then hands it on to another in terms of sonship. That other, greater Son of David, Jesus Christ, takes up all that David had taken up and includes it and transcends it.

Principles of sonship in David

What is that “all”? That “all” which finds its terminal point, its climax, in David is the principles of sonship. If the climax is David in Solomon, that is the climax in sonship, for that is the great thing that comes in with Solomon. I do not want to anticipate what will be said more fully later, but those of you who know your Bibles know that the one word which seems to cover Solomon altogether where David is concerned is this word ‘son’. “Thy son which shall come after thee”, and so on. And you know very well too from the New Testament that Solomon was a figure of Christ. The very language which seemed to be addressed to David about Solomon is taken up in the New Testament in the book of the Acts and applied to Christ, seeming to say, ‘Yes, that was all right for Solomon, in a way, but it really did not apply to him wholly and fully. It applied to another, a transcendent Solomon, the Son of all sons, above all sons.’ You know that quite well, that is simple Bible knowledge.

But if David’s climax is in sonship and therefore in glory, and in glory and therefore in sonship, we want to see what sonship means as a cumulative thing, because it is the heritage of the past. What has been going on since Abraham, under the hand of God, has been the working out of the principles and the development of sonship. Solomon does not just come in and begin and end the thing. Solomon comes in as the crown of a whole course, and we want to see that course, and we can do that very quickly and quite briefly.

Abraham — election

Back to Abraham. What does Abraham signify in this connection? Well, things begin with Abraham in a new way. God made a new beginning where Abraham was concerned in relation to this elect race, this chosen people, the seed of Abraham, and Abraham comes to us as setting forth this election, this divine choosing and calling and establishing upon covenant. Abraham was away out there beyond, and God, so to speak, went out there beyond, chose him and called him and made a covenant with him. He is called Abraham the Hebrew. The ‘Hebrew’ means ‘the man from beyond’. So that God went out beyond to find, to choose, to call, and to bring on to covenant ground, and in Abraham his seed became the covenant people, the covenant nation, and sonship, as we were pointing out earlier, rests upon that — chosen, called and covenanted in Christ. “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), says the apostle. We were called according to His purpose, and we are established upon a covenant made in His precious blood. That is where sonship begins. It is a fairly firm foundation. It goes right out beyond to the beyond to find us, to bring us in, to call us by His grace, and to establish us in the incorruptible blood of the everlasting covenant. Sonship is founded in something very substantial and strong. That is where it begins.

Isaac — death and resurrection

The next figure is Isaac. The ground has been established, the ground of sonship, and then Isaac comes along, and we all know what Isaac represents — death and resurrection, that is, the bringing to an end of a natural life or a natural relationship in order to establish the relationship upon heavenly divine ground to make it something permanent. Through death and resurrection the principle of heavenly permanence is secured. And if it is difficult for you to understand that way of putting it, let me try to simplify that by saying that this great purpose of God in His heritage in sons demands that you and I shall be entirely cut off from our natural and earthly connection and attached to heaven. That is the principle of the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus representatively. That is the meaning of our being crucified with Christ, buried with Him and raised together with Him to be taken off of one ground and to be placed upon another, for that old ground can never be the ground of God’s glory. God never gets any glory out of our old natural life, He gets nothing at all of a heritage in that realm, and He has closed it down. His heritage of glory is on other ground. We are so familiar with that; that is Isaac.

Jacob — discipline unto sonship

Jacob follows. Get the man established on covenant ground, and then the man established on heavenly ground of incorruptible, indestructible life figuratively, and you have got that, you have not got to the end of all that sonship means. You really have only come to the beginning of the practical application. Jacob, the next link in the chain, sets forth the discipline unto sonship. In a peculiar way Jacob represents sonship because it is the twelve sons of Jacob who are the nucleus of Israel. Sonship is very much in view where Jacob is concerned. I speak of Jacob as a type, a figure. But what discipline unto sonship! What a hard school Jacob had to go into, and sonship does mean that. Perhaps you have no need to be told that. God has got hold of you, called you by His grace, called you with a heavenly calling, brought you into that living relationship with His heavenly Son, the ground of His risen life, and that is not the end. It is then that things begin to happen, we go into the hard school. God is dealing with us as with sons, and we are very ready to admit when we get into that school that there is a lot of Jacob that needs dealing with. Indeed, I do not think we really know how much Jacob there is in us until we get into the Lord's hands. There is a need for this discipline unto sonship.

Joseph — suffering unto sonship

The next is Joseph. Joseph brings us into the presence of sonship through suffering, suffering unto glory. The difference between Jacob's discipline and Joseph's suffering is this, that Jacob's discipline, which was, of course, a good deal of suffering to him, was due to what was in him. Joseph's suffering was at the hands of his brethren, what came upon him from them because of the hatred of the enemy, because of envy.

Principles of sonship taken up in Israel

Well, here you have these aspects of sonship. They are very clear. Now they are all taken up collectively in the nation Israel. Every one of those things is taken into the nation — covenant, election, calling. That passes into the nation collectively. The death and the resurrection becomes a very real thing, symbolically or typically, in the life of Israel. Yes, Jacob's sons went down into Egypt, and if that was not a living grave, what was? They had to be brought out as by a mighty act of resurrection, brought out of their grave. That is Isaac in the nation. Jacob — well, did they know nothing

about discipline because of themselves, their own natural lives? Forty years they were disciplined, and at the end of forty years the verdict was: there is no glory in Jacob; all the glory will be in Israel, but that is a different kind. There is no glory in Jacob. You had better bury that. That was buried. But the discipline which brought an end to the Jacob brought a beginning to Israel, the son. Israel, prince with God. Joseph gathered into the nation. Yes, Israel also knew quite a bit about the sufferings of Joseph in the midst of the nations, at the hands of the nations. Israel's history has been suffering at the hands of others, but brought eventually, ultimately, to glory. All these things which are principles and aspects of sonship were gathered from the several individuals into the one collective nation, and David inherits them all. He becomes the embodiment of all the past history and life of the chosen people of God, but it was not just that it came to him in an hereditary way.

Principles of sonship in David

The next thing you notice is that David himself has to go through every one of those experiences, so that it is not just a traditional and historical heritage or inheritance; it becomes a very practical and personal one. It is tremendously impressive to see how much of David's own experience was the experience of the nation of which he was the crown. Some of his Psalms take us right back over the history of the nation and they find expression through his own soul as though he himself was going through that, or had gone through that and knew all about it. The great thing about the Psalms of David — and we are going to be very much occupied with them before we are through this series is that every one of them is an experience. He was not just a poet writing beautiful poems. He was a man writing or singing his experience. You can hear the echo of his own nation, of his own people and their history in so much that David writes and sings. Yes, he was the experimental or experiential embodiment of the history of the whole nation of which he was the sum.

But that was not all. We are not just talking about history in the Bible back there long ago. This comes right up to date, right up to ourselves, and we have in all that enunciated a law and that great law is this: the chosen vessel has to have in its own being all that for which it is chosen. God has no interest in theories. God has no interest in anything that is abstract. God makes things very definitely personal, a part of the very being of those who are called according thereto.

To be continued.