



Trumpet's Sound

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Editor - Pastor Harry Hratsh Kiujian

Contact Address:

ACM AUSTRALIA
PO BOX 1593,
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057
EMAIL: hkiujian@acmaust.org
URL: www.acmaust.org

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For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. 14
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Pray for Armenia

- After the war in which many lives were lost, many wounded and some taken as prisoners of war, the country is in deep spiritual pain and turmoil. Pray that God will heal and bring peace to this nation.
- Pray concerning the pandemic. More and more people are being infected daily and the government is keen to bring in new regulations.
- Pray for the many refugees who lost their land and all their belongings.
- Pray for the many poor and sick. Their numbers have not declined in the past 20 years and we have not seen such harsh conditions where the poor are crying for food.

Cover photo: Armenian genocide memorial, August 2007

The costs of the publication are covered by the gifts of believers, who donate out of the generosity of their hearts.

Be strong and courageous

So often we hear about people being scared, not knowing what decision to make, or where to go. Some do not want to watch the news because there is nothing good and each day is worse than the day before.

Moses had walked for 40 years in the desert trying to get the people to listen to and obey God. After his death, Joshua was the man. God had told him that he was to become the new leader of the Israelites.

All the promises God had previously given to Moses were passed to Joshua. It is good to read the book of Joshua, starting from the beginning.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9).

What an encouragement this verse is, but read verse 8 very carefully.

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8).

The Lord encourages us today in the same way. We are to read the Bible, meditate on His words and follow Jesus. This is the only way to victory. When we follow Jesus, fear disappears. When we follow Him, we are filled by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Joshua knew that there was no way that he could lead the people unless the Lord was with Him. It is the same today. We also can say unless the Lord comes with us, we cannot be victorious.

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Are you ready to turn your eyes to Him? Are you ready to seek His face? Are you ready to meditate on His words?

The promise is yours just the same as it was to Joshua: Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.

HK

A trilogy of Psalms

Psalms 22-24

These three psalms are all David's. We imagine they were written in very different circumstances from each other, but they provide encouraging teaching for us.

Two of these psalms are clearly Messianic. Psalm 22 concerns the death of the Lord Jesus and Psalm 24 His victory. Some commentators do not include Psalm 23 as a Messianic Psalm, but since it so clearly pictures the Lord Jesus as the shepherd of our souls, there is no reason for excluding it.

There are some points we should note. First, with the Messianic Psalms it is sometimes difficult to determine how much is from the psalmist's personal experience. This is particularly true for Psalm 22. It has elements that are more extreme than the experiences of an ordinary man. Has the Spirit guided David's thoughts so that he speaks of great David's greater Son? Did David experience something that the Spirit of God has taken and given a deeper meaning?

Psalm 23 can be thought of as the musings of a shepherd who thinks of a greater shepherd. The psalm may have been written early in David's lifetime.

Psalm 24 may have come from the time when the Ark of the Covenant was taken to Jerusalem. David thinks of the purity needed to enter the presence of the Lord and of His ultimate victory.

The three psalms form an instructive trilogy:

- *Psalm 22 is the psalm of the cross, portraying the Saviour, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)*
- *Psalm 23 is the psalm of the crook, portraying the Shepherd, the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20)*
- *Psalm 24 is the psalm of the crown, portraying the Sovereign, the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4)*

In these three psalms we have deeply contrasting scenes. Psalm 22 portrays a man in deep anguish of soul, suffering intensely. Psalm 23 pictures a person being cared for in every circumstance of life. Psalm 24 shows us the kind of person who can enter the presence of the sovereign.

Psalm 22: the Psalm of the Saviour

The experiences of this psalm appear to be too intense for David. Is he gathering together his life's experiences as if they were one? Or is he being guided so that he writes not of himself, but of the Messiah?

From David's point of view the psalm reflects a recollection of what God had done in the past, linked with a plea for God's help in the present. In this there is an admission of his unworthiness and a recognition that God had helped him in the past. However, although David may well have faced the scorn of his enemies, the Spirit of God is taking David further than his own experiences so that he prophesies about the scene at the cross.

There are four direct references to the cross of the Lord Jesus in this psalm together with some indirect references. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (v.1) is a cry of intense anguish. These are the words the Lord uttered at the end of three hours of darkness. This was the only time the Lord did not address God as "Father". But He was suffering for our sin; He was forsaken by God so that we need never be separated from Him.

During the time our Lord suffered, He was ridiculed by the religious leaders. They said that He had trusted in the Lord so the Lord should rescue Him (v7f). He could easily have been rescued. At the time of

His arrest He said that He could have called more than 12 legions of angels to assist Him. But He didn't; He did not save Himself because He was determined to save us.

"They pierced My hands and My feet" (v.16) was a prophecy of the way the Saviour would die. Death by crucifixion was not known in the psalmist's day, but he was accurately guided by the Spirit of God to write about the way the Saviour would die to pay the penalty for our sins.

"They divide My garments among them" (v18) shows the indifference of those involved in the crucifixion of the Lord.

There are also indirect references to the Lord's death. He was opposed by strong men – bulls of Bashan (v12). He experienced physical weakness – His strength was dried up (v15). And the physical effects of crucifixion meant He could count all His bones (v17).

There is an abrupt change of tone part way through verse 21. The rest of the psalm looks ahead to the millennial kingdom. The one who suffered leads the praises of His people in the great congregation. The day will come when the kingdom is acknowledged to be His.

What is the overall impression the psalm gives? We see a person who is surrounded by his enemies. He is asking for protection, but not for revenge. We see a person fully dependent on God.

When we think of this psalm, there is no way that David could have written it without the Spirit's guidance. Death by crucifixion was a Roman penalty, not a Jewish one. The psalm must speak of the suffering Messiah. But one day He will be the triumphant King. It is our responsibility to yield to His sovereignty today so that we will rejoice in His presence in a coming day.

(to be continued)

Don Stormer



Prayers of Elijah

1 Kings 16-18

Learning to pray is not a technique that you master, like riding a bicycle or driving a car, when you think, "Now that I have figured that one out, there is nothing more to learn." It is more like being a research scientist. You are constantly chipping away at the edge of a great and tantalising mystery and gradually learning as you go. One of the things that helps research scientists learn more, is the ability to compare notes and learn from one another. Scientists hold conferences and write in scientific journals so they can learn from the shared experience of others.

The Bible is full of the prayers and experiences of great men and women who prayed. These experiences are there so we can learn from them as we progress with our personal research journey into actually conversing with God through prayer.

The problem is, as we look at all these great people and their prayers, where do we begin? We can read about

- Enoch – who walked with God, and God took him straight to heaven without dying
- Abraham – who bargained with God over the fate of a city
- Moses – who spoke face to face with God as a friend
- David – in many of the Psalms
- Hannah – the woman who through prayer conquered a personal tragedy
- Elijah – who changed the course of a nation
- Daniel – whose prayer involved spiritual warfare with demonic forces
- Nehemiah – the great project manager who rebuilt a city wall out of rubble.

There are also the prayers of Christ, Mary, Paul, Peter and many others. In fact, it is hard to find anyone who truly made a mark for God for whom prayer was not the central theme of their lives.

What can we learn from the prayer of a man whom the Bible describes as ordinary? "Elijah was man just like us" (James 5:17). We will consider three key prayer experiences of Elijah. Answered prayer, Honest prayer, Listening prayer.

Answered prayer:

Finding a way for our prayers answered is something we are all interested in. However, prayer is much bigger than merely asking God to do things for us. In fact, as we go on, we discover that getting answers is important, but not as important as we thought. Prayer actually changes people.

We have here a simple picture of a man praying for rain. It had not rained in Israel for three and a half years. While Elijah was praying, clouds formed and then heavy rain fell. Is that all there is to it? To understand this spectacular answer to prayer, we must penetrate more deeply into the events surrounding this prayer. Elijah lived at a time when Israel was under the rule of King Ahab, a man who was both weak and evil. Ahab married a princess from a neighbouring pagan nation. Her name was Jezebel and, as queen, she brought into Israel the idols of her home country. Chief among these was Baal who supposedly controlled weather and fertility. Worship involved feasts, sacrifices, licentious dances and temple prostitutes. Attracted by the sensuality of Baal worship, the people of Israel abandoned their righteous Jehovah. This led to the drought.

Can you see what Elijah did to enable his prayer to be answered?

1. He dealt with known sin

He confronted the sin of Baal-worship in the land, doing so in a spectacular way. He killed the prophets of Baal and led the people in repentance.

2. His prayer was according to God's Word

Notice that Elijah knew God's Word and he knew what had caused the drought, as predicted in Deuteronomy 11. If the people walked with God, it would rain.

3. He prayed with faith

“Go, eat and drink, there is the sound of heavy rain” (1 Kings 18:41). It wasn't raining at this time. There was not a cloud in the sky, just as it had been for the past three and a half year. Elijah knew that his prayer would be answered because it was all in harmony with God's revealed word. This showed his faith.

4. His prayer was earnest

He bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees. His body language was saying something important about his state of heart. Elijah cared, he was passionate, and he bowed before almighty God in both his heart and body. Martin Luther said, “If the arrow of prayer is to be launched into Heaven, it must be sent from a bow that is fully bent.”

5. His prayer was persistent and expectant

Elijah prayed and then sent his servant to see if the clouds were coming. Six times that servant trudged out to look across that calm sea glistening under the blazing sun and cloudless sky. The seventh time he saw a tiny cloud. That was enough for Elijah. He told the servant to go and tell Ahab to get moving, or he would be stuck in the mud from the great downpour that was coming. “The sky grew black with cloud; the wind rose, and a heavy rain came.” Elijah then ran ahead of Ahab, forty kilometres all the way down to Jezreel. The prayer was answered.

Remember, James said that Elijah was a man just like us. All elements in that answered prayer are things we can do.

- *Deal with known sin*
- *Pray according to God's will*
- *Have faith*
- *Be earnest, persistent and expectant.*

(to be continued)

Rex Dearlove

Be swift, slow, slow

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

The letter written by James, brother of the Lord Jesus, has been called the New Testament's Book of Proverbs and it certainly contains both practical and profound heavenly wisdom. We see it in the single sentence quoted above.

However, the first thing we notice is that these words do not stand in isolation, because James begins, “So then...”. To see why, we take note of the previous verse:

“Of His [God's] own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).

We have been “brought forth”, that is, born again, through the gospel, “the word of truth”, to be a special people, set apart from all others for the Lord, just as the firstfruits of the harvest were set apart and holy for the Lord in days of old.

This means that we have both a great privilege and a great responsibility to live in such a manner as will be pleasing to God, and as true witnesses to His love and grace in our lives. Because of this, James writes *So then, my beloved brethren...*

If we didn't know what came next, could we have guessed? I don't think so! Why does it follow that we must be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath? To answer that, let's ask another question. What sort of person is swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath?

The man (or woman) who is swift to hear cares about the ones to whom he speaks. He wants to understand them, to know their heart and to learn from them.

The man who is slow to speak knows that only the Holy Spirit has the words of eternal life. He wants to speak His words and His wisdom, not his own.

The man who is slow to wrath is not easily offended or angered because he has given his life to the Lord and knows that only by God's abundant grace has his sin been covered. His life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3) so he has no need to fight for his position or reputation.

Love, wisdom, humility and grace characterise the walk of such Christian men and women. They have learned to live in fellowship with God, and their lives are like a light in the darkness, a visible witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus.

We want God's righteousness to be worked in our own life, in our family, in the church and in those who have not yet found the Saviour. But the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Our carnal, self-centred, self-indulgent, self-justifying, sinful life will never produce God's righteousness. However, as we learn to walk in all that the Lord has called us into, He will work in and through us for His glory.

So then, my beloved brethren...

Neil Buckman

Psalm 1

*¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers;*

*² but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.*

*³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.*

⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

*⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;*

*⁶ for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.*

We will not fear

'Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be...' (Psalm 46:2)

This world is changing rapidly. This world is so different from the world of our childhood. This world has changed a lot from the times of the sons of Korah, whom God used to write Psalm 46. This world is different from the time when the Lord Jesus walked on the roads of Galilean and Judean towns and villages. This world is different from the time of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys described in the Acts of the Apostles. This world is different from the time of the sixteenth century Reformation in Europe. This world is different in this generation compared with all other generations until now! This generation of emptiness needs real peace and fulfillment.

Strong donkey

How would you feel if you were told you reminded someone of a donkey? That's actually what happened to a son of Jacob. His name was Issachar. The name actually means "he will bring a reward", but his father, when blessing his sons, said "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute" (Genesis 49:14-15).

A scarlet worm

After the time of Abimelech a man of Issachar, Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim (Judges 10:1). "Tola" means a scarlet worm. Two men in the Bible had this name: the eldest son of Issachar (Genesis 46:13) and a judge from the tribe of Issachar who judged Israel for twenty-three years.

They understood the times in which they lived

"And the sons of Issachar, men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do, their chiefs were two hundred"

(1 Chronicles 12:32). The sons of Issachar were those that knew which season it was. They understood the times in which they were living.

What is more important than understanding our times? Before we can be a blessing in our times and possibly change the world we live in, we have to understand the One who is the Master of time, God Himself, and His methodology of changing the world.

1. Understanding God (He does not change)
2. Understanding the Gospel of God (it does not change)
3. Understanding the times (they are changing constantly) when the Gospel of God is changing the world.

We live in a changing world, but the Gospel of God remains the only unchanged power of God that is able to change the world the way God wants.

We will not fear the changes of the world, because:

- God is in control!
- God has a specific plan and purpose for this world (Job 23:13; Ephesians 1:8-12)
- God is always in control of all things and is constantly at work accomplishing His plan (Habakkuk 1:1-11; Isaiah 10:5-6)
- God controls and uses everything and everyone, even the devil, in working out His plan (Isaiah 10-7-11; Psalm 76-10)

The Gospel of God has the power to change the world!

Christians are part of God's program in changing this world! God wants to use His "donkeys" and His "scarlet worms" to change this world with the power of the Gospel! The judge Tola from the Book of Judges brought peace to the land for 23 years!

The Gospel of God is the only way of bringing peace to the world in all times, even in our postmodern times!

We are like the sons of Issachar, "donkeys" and "scarlet worms" bringing the Gospel of peace to the world! When Bildad in the Book of Job refers to man as a worm (Job 25:6), he is specific. At least a beast

has some understanding, but a worm?

It is better to be God's "donkeys" and God's "scarlet worms" and bring peace and joy to the world than to be kings, presidents, and rulers of this world, who bring war and sadness!

We need to understand God Himself, God's methodology and God's times! Without knowing God, without knowing His methodology and without understanding the times in which we live, we can do a lot of things, but we cannot change this world for the better!

God wants to use His children for His glory!

God does not want us to fear!

We have no reason to fear!

We have the privilege of being God's instruments!

This world can be changed through God's "donkeys" and God's "scarlet worms". God uses donkeys and worms today, by His wonderful grace! The problem is that sometimes we are not ready to be His donkeys and His worms. It was a donkey that brought the Lord Jesus, the prince of peace, to Jerusalem. We are to be donkeys that bring the message of the Lord Jesus to the world. This message changes the world!

*Dr. Czeslaw Bassara
(czeslaw7@eta.pl; www.proword.eu)*

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light

W*e thank all our readers, supporters and sponsors for their prayers and encouragement. ACM is active and blessed knowing well that all its efforts are not in vain.*

I have read that there are over 2,000 references to the poor in the

Bible: that literally speaks volumes. How close this must be to God's heart if the Creator of the Universe encourages and instructs us so many times to care for the poor, the orphans, the widows and the afflicted. Proverbs 14:31 says "Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God".

Stepanakert: Many of our sponsored families moved back to Stepanakert to rebuild their houses and to bring life back to normal. Brother Tomik who lives in Stepanakert joined our team to follow up the families in our care, but there is so much to be done as people are looking to find peace and security. Tomik counsels the many hurt and encourages them with God's Word.

Gyumri: Ashot and Hasmik run two meetings, one on Zoom and one from our chapel. They are also running a youth meeting and children's group. Please pray for these ministries. They visit many people at the same time as caring for our families and assisting the sick and the poor. Soon we will have a container arriving from Australia to be stored in our warehouse ready for distribution. God willing, we are anticipating three containers from Australia this year and a fourth from LA. This was organised by our ACM representative Pastor Raffi Chaparian in conjunction with ARDA and ACFOC.

Vanazor: most of our families living in this area live in metal containers. The winter was harsh, and there were few breaks from the snow. Ashot and Hasmig regularly visit the families to give them their monthly support and encourage them in Christ. We had many sick among them whom we had to send to Yerevan for treatment. The meetings are held in the containers which is not the best place but there is nowhere else to meet. Asdghik from CEF helps us regularly by running a children's club.

Yerevan: Martun, Angela, and Anni have the big task of administration and accounting, getting all the paperwork done, and being ready for auditing. We are blessed to have them with us. We have just celebrated Martun's and Angela's 10 years of service to the Lord and ACM. How wonderful is God! Martun oversees all our work including preaching, teaching, visiting, and counselling and now with visiting

the refugees. Please pray for the Lord to strengthen them in their service. Angela also looks after the administration. She is a very dedicated individual and we are blessed in having her. Home care is another one of our important ministries and Haygouhi does a great job. She is soon to be baptised and is very keen about this.

Please pray for ACM. After the war, our work has been doubled and we have many more families in our care from Syria, Lebanon, Artsakh and Armenia in need of support.

We have also released a new video showing some of the Artsakh families in our care. You can watch it on our website. By going to our website (www.acmaust.org) you can also sponsor a family or donate to this work.

