

OLD
TESTAMENT
COMMENTARY

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"Let us make man" (Gen. 1:26), "Behold, the man has become like one of us" (Gen. 3:22) and "Come, let us go down" (Gen. 11:7) are examples from early Genesis. Franz Delitzsch analyzes the Hebrew constructions here at great length, concluding that these verses manifest a "communicative plural", implying God conferring with His council.

Gen. 1:26 "God said, Let us make man in our image". Here we have the Angels making a joint decision, as they did at Babel: "The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded (again, the language of limitation, as if God had to make closer inspection- the 'LORD' must therefore be the Angels). . Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:5,7). And in Gen. 18 we have an example of Angels discussing their policy with regard to one of their charges in the physical presence of the saint: . . "and Abraham went with them (the Angels) to bring them on their way (they were therefore in his presence). And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him. . ." (v. 17-19). This conversation was presumably inaudible to Abraham. Who knows what conversations go on between our guardians as we sit with Bibles in our hands, obedient to God, and our Angels decide how much to reveal to us in accord with how they know we will behave in the future? The cherubim and living creatures are representative of the Angels. See on Ez. 3:13

Gen. 2:2 When Elohim rested on the seventh day, the implication is that they were tired- language impossible to apply to God Himself. The Hebrew for "rested" does not only mean that He ceased, but that He ceased for a reason. Ex. 31:17 is even clearer- " In six days the LORD made Heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed"- the word used to describe refreshment after physical exhaustion, e. g. regarding David and his men at Bahurim when fleeing from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:14). Notice in passing that the Angels who gave the Law of Moses are often mentioned specifically as instituting the sabbath (e. g. Ex. 31:3; Ez. 20:12,13,16,20)- because it is "the sabbath (the rest) of the Lord" (Lev. 23:3)- i. e. of the Angels who rested on that day back in Genesis. The fact man was to physically rest on the sabbath as a replica of how the Angels "rested" on that day implies that they too physically rested. The 'language of limitation' in Scripture may well often refer to the Angels rather than God personally.

3:8 presence- see on Is. 63:9

3:15 There's something of a wager here. Either the man kills the snake by hitting it on the head, or the snake will bite the man's heel. He has to kill it outright, first time. See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

3:22- see on 1:7,8

The visions of the cherubim and living creatures all seem to have Angelic associations. One of the clearest is that the cherubim were to keep "the way" to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24), whereas the keeping of the way is later said to be in the control of Angels- e. g. in Gen. 18:19 the Angels decide Abraham will keep "the way of the Lord", implying they were the ones guarding it; and in Ex. 32:8 the Angel talking with Moses on Sinai comments "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them" (see too Dt. 9:10,12).

5:29 Shall comfort us- did Noah's parents expect Noah to be the child who would do all the hard menial work for them, so that they would suffer less from the curse placed upon the ground in Eden? This might explain why Noah had children when he was 500, far older than others of his time (Gen. 5:32- Noah's father had had his first children at 182, Gen. 5:28; Seth had his first child at 105, Gen. 5:6; Enos at 95, Gen. 5:9; Cainan at 70, Gen. 5:12; Mahaleel at 65, Gen. 5:15; Jared at 162, Gen. 5:18; Enoch at 65, Gen. 5:21; Methuselah at 187, Gen. 5:25); Gen. 6:18 implies that Noah only had three sons, whereas for people with such long life spans we'd have expected him to have had far more than that. He only had three children- for he prepared the ark to save "his house" (Heb. 11:7) and Gen. 7:1 is quite clear: ""Go into the ark, you and all your household"- his whole household was his wife, three sons and their wives. Period . Perhaps we get the picture of a man who was the underdog, the farm worker, the sidekick of the family, whose own family life was delayed and limited by this background. Perhaps he turned to alcohol for comfort (hence Gen. 9:21). But it was he whom God chose to save, he alone who was righteous in that generation which perished. It was the quiet, broken man who was saved. The Hebrew word for "Comfort" occurs later, when we read how God "repented" that He had made man (Gen. 6:6,7). Lamech's desire for 'comfort' was fulfilled but not as he imagined; not through his son being his personal slave, but rather in God changing His mind about humanity and making a new start. We get what we desire, in essence; and so we need to desire the right things. Another alternative is that we are to understand 'comfort' in 5:29 as a bad translation; the idea could be that Lamech hoped that his son Noah would be the one who would bring about repentance / changing in God regarding the curse upon the earth. In this case, we see Lamech hoping that this son of his would be the promised "seed of the woman" of Gen. 3:15, a Messiah figure. However, the Lamech of 5:28 may well be the Lamech of Gen. 4:18-22; both Lamechs are described as having Methuselah as their father. As often in early Genesis, this would be a case of one history being recorded in one chapter and then another one in the next- as with the two creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. In this case, if Lamech is the same Lamech, then Noah had very gifted and high flying siblings. His brother Jabal was the leader of the cattle owners (4:20); his brother Jubal was the leading musician of the age (4:21); Tubalcain his other brother was the leader of all the metalworkers. Lamech was the first polygamist, who killed a young man for a slight insult and boasted about it; and whose wife Adah means 'decorated / adorned'. These were people of the world. And Noah was the sidekick brother who was to do all the menial farm work so the rest of them could pursue their careers and social lives. Against this of course it can be argued that there are differences in the genealogies of chapters 4 and 5. However, in the context, Gen. 6:1-4 describes how the lines of Seth and Cain intermarried [the sons of God married the daughters of men] and it

could be argued that the genealogies we have aren't complete, generations are skipped, and 'having a son' could be understood in a wider sense than referring to a son directly fathered by the person concerned. 'Lamech' in Hebrew is comprised of the three central letters of the Hebrew alphabet and it could be argued that this reflects his 'joining' function [as it does in other Semitic literature], in joining the Sethite and Cainite lines together. The resemblances between the six names in Gen. 4:17,18 with six in chapter 5 is striking, and they both culminate in Lamech, as if he was the one in whom the lines mixed. Interestingly, Lamech in Gen. 4:24 speaks of 77 fold vengeance coming upon him; and the Lamech of Gen. 5:30 [the same Lamech?] dies at 777 years old. It also needs to be carried in mind that Semitic 'genealogies' aren't always chronological; they are constructed in order to make various points or develop themes, as in the genealogies of the Lord in Matthew and Luke.

5:29 Noah- same root word found in 2 Chron. 6:41, where the ark of God 'rested' or 'Noah-ed' in the tabernacle. When the ark 'rested' on Ararat ['holy hill'] the same word is used (Gen. 8:4). A case can be made that Ararat was in fact Mount Zion, where the ark was later to 'rest' in the temple. The 'resting' of the ark was therefore the fulfilment of God's intention in Noah- God's salvation is described as a "promised rest" (Heb. 4:10,11), and it was prefigured in the final resting of the ark. Thus the final salvation of God is to be understood in terms of God 'resting' with us, in us, within His ark. He labours and struggles too... for us. And those struggles will only be at rest when we are saved in the last day; a Father's eternal struggle for His children. The 'rest' spoken of in Noah's name was thus a rest for God. Noah's going out of the ark into a cleansed, pristine world was therefore symbolic of our going forth into the Kingdom at Christ's return.

It's significant that the various Mesopotamian legends about a flood all speak of there being conflict between the divinities before the decision to flood the earth was taken; and then quarrels and recriminations between them after it. The Biblical record has none of this- the one true God brought the flood upon the earth by His sovereign will, and He lifted the flood. In the legends, the hero of the flood [cp. Noah] is exalted to Divine status, whereas in the Biblical record Noah not only remains human, but is described as going off and getting drunk. Throughout pagan legends, the Divine-human boundary is often blurred- gods get cast down to earth and become men, whilst men get exalted to 'Heaven' and godhood. This gave rise to the idea of 'angels that sinned' and were cast down to earth. But in the Biblical record, the Divine-human boundary is set very clearly- the one God of Israel is *so* far exalted above humanity, His ways are not ours etc. (Is. 55:8), that there can be no possibility of this happening. The exception of course was in the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ- but even He was born as a genuine human upon earth, and [contrary to Trinitarian theology] He was no Divine comet who landed upon earth for 33 years. The whole idea of the Divinity and personal pre-existence of Jesus Christ is simply not Biblical. The Mesopotamian legends speak of the flood being sent to stop man destroying Enlil's "rest" by his noise. The Mesopotamian gods sought for a "ceasing from toil", "rest from labour"- identical ideas to the Hebrew concept of *shabbat*. This was why, it was claimed, the gods first created man and put him to work in their garden- so that they could "rest". This background is alluded to in the way that Genesis speaks of man being *cast out* of tending the garden of Eden as a punishment- scarcely something the gods would wish if man was there to save them working there. God speaks of Him giving *man* a *shabbat* as a rest for man from his labour. And the flood, although it was Divine judgment, ultimately worked out as a blessing of 'rest' for man

in that the 'world' was cleansed from sin. Thus 'Noah' was given that name, meaning 'rest', "because this child will bring us relief from all our hard work" (Gen. 5:29 G.N.B.). Adam's work in Eden wasn't onerous; his work when cast out of the garden was hard. The wrong ideas are clearly alluded to and often reversed- in order to show that a loving God created the world for humanity, for our benefit and blessing- and not to toil for the gods in order to save them the effort. The 'rest' so sought by the Mesopotamian gods was actually intended by the one true God as His gift to humanity.

5:32 500 years old- see on 5:29. The flood came when Noah was 600 (Gen. 7:11), yet he spent 120 years preparing it (Gen. 6:3). So it's possible that he wasn't married when the call came to build the ark; he'd have explained his life mission to his wife, and she'd have been his first convert. Alternatively, if he were already married at 480, they had many years of barrenness in their marriage. Given the long lifespans in those days, this would've been very very hard to take. Yet he didn't take another wife. He was "moved with fear", 'reverently apprehensive' at what God told him, and prepared the ark in order to save his family (Heb. 11:7). Yet he began doing this before he had any children, and perhaps before he was married. He had faith that he would one day have a family, in accordance with God's invitation to make an ark in which to save his family.

6:3 120 years- Knowing the destruction that would come on all except Noah, God waited in the hope that more would be saved. He as it were hoped against His own foreknowledge that more would be saved (1 Pet. 3:20). Likewise God told Ezekiel that Israel would not hear his preaching (Ez. 3:7); and yet Ezekiel repeatedly prefaced his preaching addresses with an appeal to *please hear* God's word (6:3; 13:2; 18:25; 20:47; 34:7; 36:1,4). He was hoping against hope; his preaching work was asking him to attempt the impossible. To make a nation hear who would not hear. Jeremiah likewise was told that Israel wouldn't hear him (7:27), but still he pleaded with them to hear (9:20; 10:1; 11:6; 16:12; 17:24; 38:15); God's hope was that perhaps they would hearken (26:3) although He had foretold they wouldn't. Jeremiah was told not to pray for Israel (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11) and yet he did (Jer. 14:20; 42:2,4). It was the spiritually minded lifestyle of Noah in those 120 years which was his witness to the world of his day. Peter says in 1 Pet. 3:19 that Christ through His Spirit preached to the people of Noah's day. In 2 Pet. 2:5 he says that Noah was a preacher of, or [Gk.] 'by' righteousness to the people around him. Yet in 1 Pet. 3:19 Peter says that Christ preached to those same people through His Spirit. The resolution surely is that although Noah had never met the Lord Jesus, he lived according to the same Godly spirit as did Jesus; and this was his witness to his world. In this sense the spirit or disposition of Christ was found in all the Old Testament prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). There is ultimately only one Spirit (Eph. 4:4). The same spirit of holiness which was in Jesus was likewise thus in Noah. "The Spirit", the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are all equated in Rom. 8:9. The ark 'was' Noah for those 120 years. When the ark 'rested' on Ararat ['holy hill'] the same word, 'Noah', is used (Gen. 8:4). Likewise the things of the Lord Jesus and the salvation which is in Him, both for ourselves and others, should be likewise identified with us.

The withdrawal of a man's Spirit by God, as with the withdrawal of the Spirit gifts, is to be seen as God's judgment of man. Gen. 6:3 LXX and RVmg. implies this.

THE FLOOD AS A TYPE OF THE LAST DAYS

It is a commonly stressed theme throughout Scripture that the days of Noah are a type of the last days of AD70 were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be" . It is generally understood among us that the events of AD70 were that in the last days. Thus it is not surprising that a number of passages describe the AD70 judgments of Israel in reference to the last days:

- 2 Peter 3 is a clear example, describing the destruction of the Jewish system in AD70 as being by fire as opposed to Noah's time. It has reference, e.g. through it's links with the new Heavens and earth of Is. 65, with the destruction of the present system.
- Nahum 1 describes the coming judgements on Israel in terms of mountains and hills splitting, and there being no refuge.
- Dan. 9:26 describes the Romans in AD70 destroying " the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be as in Noah's time.
- Is. 54:9 describes the judgments on Israel being " as the waters of Noah" . The end of the flood, the end of Israel.
- In the light of this the Lord's parable about the man building on sand whose house was destroyed when the Lord came, has reference (as so many of the parables do) to the judgement on the Jewish house in AD70. Those who built on rock were Jews- also described as shoddy builders in Mt. 21:42; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7; Mic. 3:10; Jer. 22:13.
- The flood waters were upon the earth for 5 months. The siege of Jerusalem in AD70 lasted for the same period. Israel which started in AD67. The three and a half year suffering of Israel which culminated in AD70 may well be typified in which case the flood would typify the final months of that period, during which the judgments will be poured out. Hos. 9:10 may also have some relevance here.

Thus the state of Israel in AD70 was typified by the world of Noah's time, which therefore looks forward also to our last days between that period and our last days which are made in 2 Pet. 3 and the Olivet prophecy.

All things relevant

We can therefore look at the Genesis record of the lead up to the flood and be confident that every detail has been given of the fact that we should feel the same tenseness and intensity as Noah did as he waited for the rain. Note how Hos. 6:3; Joel 2:23.

- Our present population explosion has only been paralleled in Noah's time. The longer life-spans could have been bearing in mind the lack of present constraining factors such as adverse climate, space, physical degeneration and so on. In fact, it is likely that in the 10 generations from Adam to Noah up to 2,000 million people were produced.
- These longer life-spans would have resulted in a great accumulation of knowledge and skills in the arts and sciences (as with Noah) as " an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron" , hinting at technical education and industrial development (the harp and organ" (Gen. 4:21); a growth in so-called culture (i.e. sophisticated pleasure- educated Christians) as " instructor..father..father" .
- God saw that " the imagination of man's heart" was evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21); not from his birth, showing

times rather than to man's innate sinfulness. The implication is that God was especially saddened at the evil that is more today?

- Cain's first big city (Gen. 4:17) no doubt spawned others. Complex, selfish city life would have been apparent in the modern world.

- "Lamech shall be avenged seventy and seven fold" (Gen. 4:24) he boasted. Does this hint at the war preparation for one's 'rights' which fills the earth today?

- There is an emphasis on there being a "father" of all the cattle keepers, all the musicians, and an instructor of all the workers of commercial cartels and unionism which we have today?

- The earth being filled with violence (Gen. 6:11) needs little comment. Note how this verse is quoted in Ez. 22:16, the earth being filled with violence. Similarly Gen. 6:13 is alluded to in Ez. 7:2,3,6. This opens up an understanding of the AD70 as well as other periods. The flood being such a clear type of AD70, passages which allude to it must be significant.

- The "giants" of Gen.6:4 comes from a Hebrew root meaning 'hackers or assailants'- implying arrogant gang warfare. R.V. gives the same impression. Compare this with the gang warfare and intimidation of the Americas and modern times.

- The world was characterized by *hamas*- "unrighteousness" (Gen. 6:11). 'Hamas' can mean "lawlessness perpetuated by violence" that the 'land' promised to Abraham- the arena of the Biblical flood- is to be dominated by 'Hamas' or a like to it.

- Job 22:15-18 comments on the people living just before the flood that they cast off all commitment to God and pursued material wealth despite a viciously God-forsaking attitude. Exactly the scene today.

- One of the few women mentioned as being contemporary with Noah was Adah- meaning 'to decorate, ornament'. All that they chose (Gen. 6:2). Dressed up women picked up at will by sex-mad men could not be a more telling picture. Adah is picked out in Scripture as having major similarities with the last days- Sodom, Noah's time, Israel in AD70- and the present. There can be no doubt that this is a major indication that we are in the last days.

- Signs within the ecclesia seem to herald the Lord's coming even clearer than those without. As a prelude to the flood (Gen. 6:2)- the true believers married unbelievers. However, the "sons of God" often refers to Israel (Is. 43:6) and that there will be a big Jewish inter-marriage problem in the last days too. There is ample evidence of this.

- Given this apostasy of the sons of God and the unwillingness of the world to listen to Noah's preaching (2 Pet. 2:1) there was only 9 strong. 'Methuselah' means 'When he dies, it shall come'- suggesting that he died a few days or weeks before the flood, falling away one by one until it was just that old brother, the middle aged Noah, and his three faithful sons (not counting the influence). The small, declining size of our ecclesias and the total apathy to our preaching should not discourage us. It should be read into them in the light of Scripture. And the message here is that such things clearly indicate that we are in the temptations of these 'last days' before the flood were one family unit. As these events are so pregnant with latent meaning, a faint hint that strongly led family units are the way to survive the last days. Noah is described as "the eighth" generation of people saved in the ark, he was "the eighth" ; he put the others first. The three who escaped the judgments of the flood were of the same family; possibly implying the same thing. It must surely be significant that our strongest member was the youngest.

However, the general spiritual apathy grieved God at His heart, we are told. This reminds us of the often overheard prayer today grieves Him, and it is to be expected therefore that He is all the more intently watching us, to see whether we will be saved.

of this desperate age.

Waiting for the rain

It is worth pausing to make a powerful devotional point. A careful reading of Gen. 7:7,10,13,16 reveals that Noah entered the ark and then finally at the end, perhaps when he had finished loading the animals. At the second entry he was shut out of things- being in Christ by baptism, and being saved from the tribulations to come on the world of the last days. The first entries of Noah into the ark. If our baptism is like that first entering in, then Noah's tense, earnest waiting for the rain towards the second coming (cp. the rain). We should live our whole lives after baptism as if we know for certain that the rain is coming.

For Noah and his family the reality of these things would have ebbed and flowed during that week- some days they would be with them in the back of their minds as an ever-present reality. Methuselah's death by the time they entered the ark, the shortness of the time ('Methuselah' = 'when he dies, it shall come'). By being in the ark with them, that same reality would be they have felt so estranged from the world around them which they knew had such limited time left to satisfy their desires. They had paid to their own possessions, homes, farms and all the other material things around them which they knew would be taken from them to us. Instead their minds would have been obsessed with the ark, the symbol of their faith down through the centuries. 'It' would have been their way of thinking down through those years, as Noah in faith prepared the ark for the coming of the Lord. Our dedication and consumption with the things of the truth, the ark, Christ our Lord and His ecclesia.

A refuge from the storm

The animals were gathered from all over the world. They cannot represent the saints- Noah's family represent the saints from all over the world who will survive the judgements on the world due to their association with us. Thus the animals that respond may well survive the holocaust to come upon the world to live in the new age of peace, like that which is the ultimate fillip to our enthusiasm for preaching- no longer obsessed with numbers of baptisms but with the number of animals than unclean were taken into the ark. Peter in Acts 10 saw a vision in which clean animals represented the saints. More Jews will survive the judgements to come on the world than Gentiles? Given the many Jews that we know of, this line of interpretation is correct very few Gentiles will survive at all.

This throws interesting light on the likely population in the Millennium. If each saint rules over some mortals, as the Bible indicates, then the population of the cities cannot be that great. For all the world to come and worship at Jerusalem, the numbers suggest small numbers relative to the present world population. Everything apart from what was in the ark was destroyed. The description. Thus in the last days, which will be an even fuller cataclysm than anything yet seen on the earth, only a handful survive. "Every living substance was destroyed...man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the flying things...and rain?" (Gen. 7:23). As only a remnant of the human and natural creation survived, so only a remnant of the world will remain on the earth. The fact an olive tree survived indicates that there was not total destruction. This kind of mass destruction is the last days: "I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the land...I will consume man and beast; I will consume man from off the land...that day is a day...of clouds and thick darkness...and I will bring distress upon men, the day of wrath, the day of clearly flood language; the description of blind men may connect with Zech. 14:12 prophesying the loss of eyesight (the men of Sodom were smitten with blindness in another type of the last days). Is. 54:9,10 promises that although there are coming judgments, yet He will never totally reject them on account of the remnant: "As I have sworn that the waters shall not overflow, have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke (reject) thee. For the mountains *shall* depart, and the hills shall be removed from thee". This is surely saying that the same order of physical catastrophe as came upon the earth at the flood will be repeated. We must not see this as God breaking His covenant of faithfulness to His true people. Heb. 11:1,7 stresses how much Noah feared the nature of the flood; he was "moved with fear" by these predictions. The physical world around us is going to be destroyed.

easier for us to come to terms with the fact that *all* aspects of *our* surrounding world will likewise pass away.

Noah's response was to prepare " an ark to the saving of his house...and became heir of the righteousness which represents Christ. Noah's response was not to smugly reflect how that soon he would be vindicated for his separation from the world by his righteousness. Instead he took seriously God's warning that sinners were to soon be destroyed. Noah was, of course, not righteous, but he cried out to God in faith, asking for God to count him as if he were righteous, so that he would be saved from the flood. The righteousness imputed to him. He showed his faith that God really had justified him by doing something physical. His faith likewise leads us to baptism into Christ. Through Christ, God " scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." LXX concerning the wicked imagination of man's heart at the flood. This is even more evidence that we can have salvation from the judgment upon sin, and also of the events of the last days, when that salvation will be physically demonstrated. It is clearly the judgments which must come upon sin. By our nature, we are part and parcel of that sin which has brought us to this righteousness, which we may feel we have as a result of our physical separation from the world. We must insist on the coming, to make sure that we are covered in the righteousness of Christ, so that the impending destruction of the world before has the body of Christ so needed to learn the lesson of Noah; to cease from our own works, " and become

God "remembered Noah" (Gen. 8:1) whilst he was in the ark. Moses uses the same figure in Gen. 30:22 to describe his prayer. Likewise God 'remembered' the righteous in Sodom in response to Abraham's prayer (Gen. 19:29). In the world's judgment, he was earnestly praying for the days to be shortened, and to be allowed to emerge from the flood. This is to the urgent prayer of the faithful in the last days- a theme which we will often have cause to underline in the future.

Notes

(1) Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary On The Book Of Genesis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998) Vol. 2 p. 52.

6:6 Grieved- see on 8:10; Is. 63:10. Prov. 3:20 RV says that " By his knowledge the depths were broken up, and the skies dropped down the rain" . The flood was brought about by God's wisdom, not because a deity lost his patience and temper with mankind. God destroyed mankind because of His *grief* (Gen. 6:6)- and He did so because He planned on saving the world through water (1 Pet. 3:20). Noah and the faithful were saved from corruption and the faith being lost by the world that threatened to destroy them (spiritually) being itself destroyed. There are many allusions to the flood in Job, notably in the descriptions of the waters being stored up by God, released by Him as He wishes, and having had bounds now placed upon them after the flood (Job 38:9-11,22,33; 26:8; there's specific mention of the flood in Job 22:16). The flood would've been relatively recent history in Job's time. It's therefore instructive to read in Job 37:11-13 that God sends His waters upon the earth partly for correction, partly in judgment, and also partly "for mercy". The flood was in a sense a Divine mercy, in ending the existence of impenitent sinners.

Gen. 6:6 says that "It repented The LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart". To repent means to change around. It was the Angels who actually made man on earth, in the image of themselves, and we have shown that it was the Angels who actually brought the flood on the earth. So it was they who repented and therefore decided to bring the flood. Thus only Noah "found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (v. 8). The eyes of the LORD are the Angels- it was they

who surveyed the earth and saw that it was wicked, except for Noah. The phrase in v. 13 "the end of all flesh is come before Me" implies that it was brought to God's attention- another example of language of limitation, which must refer to the Angels. Thus it was the Angels who repented, or changed their mind, about creation.

6:7 man, beast, creeping things, birds- a reversal of the creation order in Gen. 1:20-27.

6:7,8 I will destroy man... but Noah- Could imply that God's initial intention was to totally destroy humanity, but because Noah found grace [the idiom could imply God heard his prayer], God made a way of escape for Noah and intended to found a new humanity from him. I've elsewhere commented that much in the early Pentateuch is connectable with Israel's later history; Moses' account in Genesis was in order to explain to Israel in the wilderness the background to their situation. The situation here in 6:7,8 recalls how God wanted to destroy all Israel and make of Moses a new nation (Ex. 32:10); but Moses, like Noah, found grace in God's eyes (Ex. 33:13; 34:9). Moses describes himself as one who had found grace in God's eyes at the very time that God speaks of making a new nation from him- he saw the connection.

6:8 found grace- see on 9:21. Noah was saved by grace and was likely not without his weaknesses. Finding grace may suggest that He sought it- that he recognized his weakness [alcoholism?] and asked for God's grace; and found it. 2 Pet. 2:5 speaks of how "the old world" was not "spared", but Noah was, in that he was saved. His salvation was by grace, it was a 'being spared' rather than a reward for his righteousness.

6:9 The generations of Noah- a Hebraism for 'an account of the life' of Noah. Yet the Hebrew for "generations" means just that. We expect to now encounter a list of children, grandchildren etc. Instead we read a summary of Noah's character. His children, his offspring, his memorial in this earth, was not his children, but rather his character. This is comfort for the childless. Our characters are our generation. This is what shall remain beyond the grave; for our spirit, the personality we develop, abides with God after our death and shall live eternally as 'us' at the Lord's return to earth. So often, individual character development becomes subsumed beneath the pressures of childrearing. But our ultimate "generation" is us, our personality and character.

6:9 Perfect- complete. All parts of his life were devoted to God, the lesson of the whole burnt offerings.

6:9 Just- We must note the tension between God showing grace, undeserved favour, to Noah- and him being described here as a just or righteous man. Heb. 11:7 states that Noah's righteousness was that which comes from justification by faith. He was the forerunner of Abraham. Noah was counted righteous, because he believed- he believed God's words about the flood coming, he gave 120 years of his life to building an ark, and by his example witnessed to the world and pleaded with them to also believe. It wasn't that God as it were rewarded Noah for his good deeds by counting righteousness to him. Otherwise there'd be no meaning to the statement that Noah found grace from God (6:8). So we can see how it worked out- Noah's reasoning must've been something like: 'We're all sinners and quite

rightly done for by this flood that will come, me as well as the rest of my world. But... wait up... God has given *me* a way out of this, by building an ark and being saved from it. But... I'm a sinner and deserve to die in this judgment that's coming. So how can it be, that *I*, with all my weakness and dysfunction, can survive this judgment? It must be that although I am worthy of destruction in the flood, God's willing to count me as if I'm righteous and therefore not destroy me with the world of the ungodly. Wow. He counts *me* as if I am righteous... and I believe that. So I will go on building the ark and seek to persuade as many others to believe God is willing to count them as righteous and if they believe that, they'll jump on board the ark with me'.

6:9 Walked with God- moment by moment in the day, we are to be "with" God, on a journey with Him. All life is movement, a journey. It's not a case of being on a journey whilst others are static, but moving with God.

6:12 God looked- He does all the time (Ps. 14:2; 53:2,3). 'Looking upon' is an idiom for answered prayer or God's response to human request (Gen. 6:12; 29:32; Ex. 2:25; Dt. 26:7; Jud. 6:14; Lk. 1:48). Perhaps [as often in early Genesis] we have the same events recorded in different words; in 6:8 we learn that Noah found grace in God's eyes; and perhaps in response to Noah's prayers for salvation from his evil world, God looked upon the earth and decided to destroy it in response to Noah's prayers. Not that necessarily Noah prayed for earth's destruction; but this was the method God used to answer whatever Noah was asking for.

6:12 Corrupt... corrupted – The same word is translated 'destroy' when we read of God's resolve to 'destroy' humanity with the flood (Gen. 6:13,17). Humanity had destroyed themselves; Divine condemnation and judgment is only really a working out of what people have done to themselves. The same word occurs in Ex. 32:7, where we read that Israel had corrupted / destroyed themselves. This is an example of how within the Pentateuch, events in early Genesis set the scene for the later story of Israel.

6:13 Both Moses and Peter stress that God brought the flood upon "the world of the ungodly", i.e. the wicked *people*. The Jewish writings claimed that the purpose of the flood was to destroy sinful Angels, and that mankind suffered from the result of their destruction. Thus the *Testament of Naphtali* 3.5: "Likewise the Watchers departed from the order of nature; the Lord cursed them at the Flood". The Jewish writings repeatedly change the Biblical emphasis upon wicked people (especially Jews), claiming that the various Divine judgments were upon wicked Angels. Quite why people on earth should have to suffer the result of this remains a begged question.

6:14 rooms- Heb. nests. There is a unique place for each of us prepared in God's eternal house- Jn. 14:1-3

6:14 pitch it- cp. our being sealed in Christ with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). The same idea is to be found in the Lord shutting in Noah (Gen. 7:16). The Hebrew for 'pitch' is related to the word for 'covering', as in the atonement covering for sin.

6:15 The ark was not designed for sailing, it had no means of self propulsion, nor self-steering. The ark represents Christ, entering Him by baptism (1 Pet. 3:19-21). Once there, we're in God's hands.

300 x 50 x 30 is the same proportion as the human body- significant in that the ark is understood by Peter as being a type of the body of Christ, into which the believer enters by baptism.

6:16 Window- Heb. a light (as RV, ASV), a glistering thing; the word comes from the word for pressed oil. The Rabbis suggest it was a precious stone. If so, it would look forward to the Lord Jesus as the light of our world as we live within the ark. This isn't the same Hebrew word as in Gen. 8:6, where Noah opened a window in the ark.

6:17 The condemned world of Noah's time [the flood was a clear type of the final judgment] were to 'pine away / languish' (Gen. 6:17; 7:21- AV "die"). The wicked will melt away from the Lord's presence (Ps. 68:2). Rejected Israel are described as being "ashamed away" (Joel 1:12)- the same idea. This is the idea behind Heb. 12:15 RVmg: "...man that falleth back from the grace of God". What they did in this life in slinking away from the reality of pure grace will be what is worked out in their condemnation experience. 1 Jn. 2:28 speaks of them as being "ashamed from before him at his coming", the Greek suggesting the idea of slinking away in shame.

6:18 wife- Noah had only one wife, even though it seems she wasn't very fruitful. Polygamy was likely popular amongst the wealthy- indicating Noah's faithfulness to his wife as well as possibly his poverty

6:18 Establish- the covenant wasn't established until Noah left the ark, Gen. 9:11. Noah lived by faith in this promise of a promise- which is what this was.

6:18 With thee- you singular. God established His covenant with Noah personally, but Noah was able to save his family as well on account of his covenant relationship with God. Ez. 14:14,20 state that in Ezekiel's time, Israel were so wicked that Noah would've saved only himself and not his family. Yet Heb. 11:7 says that Noah saved his family by preparing the ark. The implication could be that Noah's spirituality 'covered' his weaker family, because they were not as unspiritual as the people of Ezekiel's time, although still in need of saving by another. This suggests that to some extent, we can affect the salvation of third parties, especially family members, by our own finding of grace before God. Noah is strangely described as "the eighth person" of the eight who were saved (2 Pet. 2:5). Perhaps this means that he put the salvation of the others first, and entered last of all into the ark. The covenant was with him, relating to his personal salvation; but he wasn't spiritually selfish, but rather worked to incorporate others within his own salvation. And God remembered this, calling him "the eighth" (RV "Noah with seven others").

6:19 shall you bring... shall come unto you (6:20). Noah's ark is a well known type of the salvation which humanity can find in Christ; and yet close analysis of the Genesis record reveals that there were some animals whom Noah had to bring into the ark and take them with him (Gen. 6:19; 7:2); and others who came to Noah and entered into the ark of their own volition (Gen. 6:20; 7:9,15,16). The same Hebrew is found in Gen. 8:9, about how the dove came to Noah of its own volition, and Noah welcomed her and took her into the ark. Putting all this together, we are to compel men to come in (Lk. 14:23); and yet we are also to be there to welcome in the seekers who seek of their own volition. It's easier to do the latter; to put up

a website, waiting there for some eager seeker to come and find. But we are also to compel people in, and to also bear in mind that there are some who will be attracted to the Gospel from selfish reasons, as the man who buys the field thinking that he can exploit it for his own benefit. These too we are to take on board and not turn away. Whilst people, with all their wonderful uniqueness, should never be pigeon-holed nor over-categorized... all the same, we need to consider the type of person we're dealing with as we plan out our approach. For if we seek them, we will consider who they are, and how appropriately we can engage them.

6:19 of every sort- all kinds of people preserved in Christ. If Noah hadn't brought them in, much to the mockery of the surrounding world, they wouldn't have been saved. Few, i.e. 8 people, were saved in the ark (1 Pet. 3:20). The animals therefore don't represent the 'saved'. The point may simply be that through our salvation, there is also the salvation of the animal world; or perhaps the animals were representative of those who will be given the chance of redemption after the Lord has returned and established the Kingdom, both good and bad, clean and unclean. Note the use of clean and unclean animals to symbolize people hearing the Gospel in Acts 10:9-16.

6:20 Come unto thee [Noah]- cp. Jn. 6:37 "All that the Father gives me shall come to me". Noah was a type of Christ, saving His household. As "Come unto me" (Mt. 10:28).

6:21 food... for them. This would've involved Noah observing the animals carefully in order to understand what food they required. If his gathering of the animals represents our gathering of people for the Kingdom, we can learn from this- to understand those whom we seek to bring in to Christ and care for in Him. Seeing they were in the ark for a year and 10 days (7:11 600th year, 2nd month, 17th day of the month to 601st year, 2nd month, 27th day, 8:13,14), this involved a huge amount and variety of food; and also observing the animals to see what they each ate. People really would've thought Noah was crazy.

6:22 During the preparation period, Noah was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5). But there's no hint in the Genesis record that he preached in any formal sense. 1 Pet. 1:11; 3:19-21 suggest that he made his witness through "the spirit of Christ". His very preparation for the coming of the day of the Lord was his witness. Noah must be one of the greatest examples of witness through silent example (cp. 1 Pet. 3:1), openly structuring his life around his faith in God's promised future rather than living just for today. 1 Pet. 3:20 says that God's patient grace "waited" whilst the ark was being prepared. But the Greek really means to "await", with the idea of expectation, looking for something. So as Noah preached, God's grace eagerly looked for and awaited a result. The result may appear tiny- 'just' his wife, three sons and three young women whom they then married. But God's grace was eagerly awaiting and anticipating the success of his witness. And it's just the same with our witness and appeal for baptism into the Christ ark in these last days, which were typified by that period of Noah's life.

7:1 Come thou [singular]... for thee [you singular] have I seen righteous- the focus is always upon God's individual relationship with Noah, as a result of which his family are saved. God saw Noah as righteous- but not his family? Noah and the seven had to leave behind their homes, land and families. They were promised just the bare necessities of life in the ark- just as we are assured of in Christ. God 'saw' Noah as righteous- not that he was in himself, but God imputed righteousness to him, for Noah was saved by grace not his own righteousness, Gen. 6:8.

7:1 Come thou- definitely alluded to in Is. 26:20,21. There seems a principle that God somehow removes or safeguards His people whilst He judges the earth (Gen. 19:22; Ex. 8:22; 9:26; Rev. 7:3).

7:1 all thy house- his entire family consisted of his three sons. He therefore had no daughters and it would seem that his sons had no children. This tiny family size must be significant- for in those long lived ages, most women would have likely had over 50 children. Again, it was the small, broken and despised who were chosen of God. It seems that Noah's daughters in law only started bearing after the flood.

7:2 By sevens- three pairs and one for sacrifice? Or, seven pairs.

7:3 Face of all the earth / land- the earth / land is often described as having this "face", or 'presence', as if it is somehow consciously alive and is "the presence" of God to us. Hence any defacement of the planet is an act done upon the face or presence of God.

7:4 cp. 10- seven days of waiting for the rain whilst "shut in" cp. Is. 26:20. However, an alternative reading is possible. 7:4 "For yet seven days" could imply that Noah was asked to come into the ark seven days before the rain started coming. But Gen. 7:13 [along with Mt. 24:38; Lk. 17:27- quite an emphasis] says he entered only on the day that the rain came. Why did he hang around outside for those seven days? Surely because he was still desperately appealing for people to enter the ark. This points forward to the intensity of our appeal to the world which there should be in the very last days, going into the byways and hedges and compelling [or trying to compel] people to "come in" (Lk. 14:23). If we think we're in the last days, our appeal should have this intensity. These seven days could be read as a delay by God in bringing the judgment of the flood, and may be alluded to in 2 Pet. 3:9, where we read that God's patience waited in the days of Noah because He so urgently awaited / hoped for repentance and response.

7:4 Cause it to rain- God sending His rain upon the just [Noah and the other seven 'just', 6:9] and unjust [the unrighteous world] may be an allusion to this (Mt. 5:45). The universe isn't just ticking away by clockwork with God somehow distant and uninvolved. He is actively involved with us, and in that sense is not far from any one of us. Mt. 5:45 certainly sounds like a reference to the flood- and yet the context is of God's love towards both sinners and righteous alike. The destruction of "the old world" was therefore an act of love- although that's very hard for our human minds to accept. To curtail the lives of the wicked who refuse to repentant after extensive appeal to them, is, in fact, Divine grace.

7:5 Noah did all that was commanded him- "Did all that was commanded by the Lord" is a phrase which in Hebrew occurs around 100 times in the Old Testament. The first occurrence of a phrase in the Bible is often instructive. In Gen. 6:22 and 7:5 we have the first occurrence of this, concerning Noah. He is therefore set up as a paradigm of faithful obedience to God which inspired many of later generations.

7:6 600 years old- The Biblical account of the flood gives details which are imaginable, earthly realities; there is nothing of the grossly exaggerated and other-worldly which there is in the pagan flood legends. Thus the Biblical dimensions for the ark are realistic, whereas the boat mentioned in the Babylonian legend recorded by Berossus was supposedly about one kilometre long and half a

kilometre wide. Noah was 600 years old according to the Biblical record, whereas Ziusudra, the Mesopotamian equivalent of Noah, was supposedly 36,000 years old at the time of the flood.

7:7 His son's wives- The sons were born to Noah when he was around 500, so by the time of the flood they were around 100 years old, as the flood came when he was 600 (7:6). Lamech, Noah's father, had children at 182; most men of that epoch seem to have begun families by that age. Seeing there are no mention of Noah's sons having any children, it could be surmised that they took wives immediately prior to entering the ark, so as to "keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth" (Gen. 7:3). Those women in their turn must have been motivated by faith to go into the ark; surely they'd have faced huge opposition and rejection from their families for marrying into that strange 'Ark' family. Their motive could only have been faith in Noah's preaching, backed up as it were by the spirit of Christ which was seen in him (1 Pet. 1:11; 3:18-20; 2 Pet. 2:5). Indeed, 1 Pet. 3:18-20 speaks of some people at Noah's time who "once were disobedient" but who were converted by his preaching in the spirit of Christ. Who were those converts, if they weren't those three girls who then married his sons?

7:7 Because of- Heb. 'in the face of'. We have noted the Biblical emphasis upon the fact that Noah entered the ark on the very day the flood came; but this phrase seems to imply that he waited until the very last minute. It seems this was not due to any lack of faith, but rather because of the urgency and desperation he felt in appealing to others to come into the ark with him. He truly was a remarkable "preacher of righteousness". Our knowledge of this world's future means that as we walk the streets and mix with men and women, our heart should cry out for them, no matter how they behave towards us, and there should be a deep seated desire for at least some of them to come to repentance and thereby avoid the judgments to come.

7:7 Because of the waters- they'd not seen the waters, but faith sees those things which are not as though they are, following God's principle of thinking likewise (Rom. 4:17; Heb. 11:3). Noah was "moved with fear" because of what he believed would come (Heb. 11:7- just as we should be, for the same phrase is used in Hebrews about us at Heb. 4:1).

7:9 Unto Noah- again the emphasis is upon Noah personally as the agent of salvation.

7:15 They went in unto Noah- he gathered them, but they came unto him, as in our witness to the world. Animals are shy; did Noah work for many years to understand animals so that they came to him [cp. our understanding of the audience we preach to]? Or was it that animals only came to fear humans after the flood (Gen. 9:2) and therefore they came more naturally to Noah without their present shyness and nervousness of human beings?

7:16 Shut him in- see on 6:14. Note again the emphasis upon Noah- the animals came to him personally, *he* was shut in, and thereby his family and the animals were shut in too. As 7:23.

7:16 Shut him in- the same Hebrew word occurs in Is. 26:20,21: "Come my people, enter into your chambers [cp. the rooms / nests in the ark] and shut your doors about you; hide yourself as for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the LORD is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain". This passage in Isaiah seems to be applying the language of the

flood to the preservation of God's people in the last days. The mention of the blood shed upon earth recalls Gen. 9:6.

7:19 high hills- perhaps a reference to the "high places" where idols were worshipped.

7:22 dry land- Heb. implies a parched or waste land. This could suggest that the flood was local, of a waste land / wilderness forming a basin hemmed in by mountains. Or it could suggest that the busy, prosperous world of Noah was spiritually a waste land, a desert.

7:23 Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him- Yet again, Noah is the focus of salvation, but in him and with him his family were saved.

7:24 150 days- 5 months, a pattern of the last days, Rev. 9:5,10.

Gen. 8:1 "God remembered" Noah in the ark, implying He has the capacity to forget or be oblivious; this 'language of limitation' may refer to the Angels rather than God personally. It would be worth speculating whether every time God is said to 'remember' something, this language of limitation refers to Angels, who have the capacity to have their memories limited, and to need to remember things. After God remembers, He often does an action which necessitates other Angelic action, as if one Angel- the one which 'remembers'- commands other Angels. One wonders whether this is the case when God "remembered" Noah in the ark and sent a "wind" to drive back the waters. The Angel "Who maketh His Angels Spirits (winds)" was therefore sending an Angel in control of a wind to execute His work. The idea of the Angels being in control of the winds and all elements of the natural world is a common one, seen most clearly in the book of Job. Or it could be that from Noah's perspective- and Genesis is at times written from the standpoint of human beings on earth, e.g. the creation record- God had forgotten him, but now God remembered him. In this case we would have another indication of Noah's imperfect faith.

8:1 Remembered- The language of angelic limitation? This is an *elohim* statement, rather than of Yahweh Himself. The Hebrew for 'remembered' is elsewhere used in the sense of making mention of (Gen. 40:14; Ex. 23:13 etc.). Did the Angels make mention of Noah before the Council of Heaven, and God responded by sending out an Angel / wind to pass over the earth and drive back the waters? God makes His Angels spirits / winds (Ps. 104:4). Or it could be simply presenting things from the perspective of Noah, who [like us] would've been tempted to think that God had 'forgotten' him?

God "remembered Noah" (Gen. 8:1) whilst he was in the ark. Moses uses the same figure in Gen. 30:22 to describe how God 'remembered' Rachel in responding to her prayer. Likewise God 'remembered' the righteous in Sodom in response to Abraham's prayer (Gen. 19:29). Could this not imply that whilst Noah was spared from the world's judgment, he was earnestly praying for the days to be shortened, and to be allowed to emerge from the ark into the new world? This would point forward to the urgent prayer of the faithful in the last days.

8:1 "made a wind". The flood makes a good case study of Angelic control of the natural world. Jude 14 quotes Enoch's prophecy of the flood as saying that it would be associated with the Lord coming with "ten thousands of His saints" (Angels- cp. Dan. 7). The fact that Angels were used to cause the flood is found written between the lines of the Genesis account. The "windows of Heaven" being opened must refer to Angelic activity, as Job describes God calling for the wind and lightning to

obey Him, and they come to Him and obey. This language must be about animate beings- i. e. the Angels responsible for these elements of nature. Gen. 8:1 says God remembered Noah- the language of limitation, as God Himself cannot forget or need to bring things to memory. We have suggested that this language of limitation be always applied to the Angels; thus it would seem they were in charge of the flood. "God (the Angel co-ordinating the flood?) made a wind (an Angel- "Who maketh His Angels spirits"- 'spirit' is the same word as 'winds') to pass over the earth. . and the waters returned from off the earth, in going and returning (A. V. mg.)". This last phrase is used elsewhere about the Angels as God's eyes roaming around the earth on His missions, and also there is the connection with the ideas already discussed of the Angels constantly going to and fro between God and the earth and around the earth.

Gen. 8:2 states clearly that it was God who caused the flood rains to cease and the waters to subside- whereas the pagan myths claim that it was the sun god who appeared and caused the waters to evaporate. The Biblical record says nothing about the waters disappearing by solar evaporation, but claims they subsided as a result of the work of Israel's God.

8:3 Continually- Heb. 'in going and returning'. This is the language of the surges of huge tidal waves, caused by the underwater eruptions of the "fountains of the deep" being broken up (Gen. 7:11; 8:2). Being in the ark must've been a very rocky ride; the boat would've been tossed and thrown most of the time. And so it is with our ride in Christ.

8:4 rested- see on 5:29

8:4 seventeenth day of the seventh month- Israel left Egypt on the 14th day of Abib, the seventh month which became the first month in their new calendar; they likely crossed the Red Sea on the 17th day of that month. So perhaps it was on the very same day that the ark rested. Israel's passage through the Red Sea typified baptism (1 Cor. 10:1,2), just as Noah's passing through the flood waters did (1 Pet. 3:19-21). Note that this was the same day that the Lord Jesus was resurrected- He died at Passover, 14th Abib, and resurrected three days later, 17th Abib.

8:6 The window which he had made- This is not the same Hebrew word which some versions translate 'window' in Gen. 6:16 [see note there]. There had been no command to make this window. Does this suggest a lack of faith within Noah, wanting to see what was going on outside, when God had designed the ark as a structure which didn't give those within it the opportunity to see where they were going? The humanity and weakness of Noah is what makes him accessible to us as an example. It could be argued that the sending forth of the raven and dove were in themselves a lack of faith- for he had been commanded to preserve the animals, and letting one go like that was hardly responsible. But God conceded to Noah's humanity and worked with him in this. The window was more of a spy hole- 8:9 speaks of Noah putting his hand out of it and pulling in the dove. It's worth reflecting whether obsessions with prophecy are some kind of building a futile spy hole, when we are to trust our ultimate salvation to the Lord, in His good time. We have remarked elsewhere that events in early Genesis are to be connected with similar things later in the Pentateuch. The sending out of the two animals to know the state of the land perhaps connects with Moses' sending out of the spies to know the state of the land- and this too wasn't an act of great faith, for

Moses surely should've believed the Divine / Angelic information about the state of the land rather than having to rely upon human investigation.

8:9 Found no rest- no Noah. It was Israel who were to later find no rest for the sole of their feet as they tramped the Gentile world [same Hebrew words in Lam. 1:3]. Their returning to the Lord was prefigured by the dove's return to Noah.

8:9 She returned- There's a definite allusion to this in Ps. 116:6,7 [the surrounding verses there have several allusions to Noah and the flood]: "The LORD preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return, O my soul, to your rest [Heb. *Noakh*- Noah]; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you". The Psalmist felt himself as that simple dove, flying over this shattered world looking for a place to land, and finding none, only to return to the Lord- symbolized by Noah. Note how in Ps. 55:6 the Psalmist also wishes to be as a dove. This is surely the way to read and use Scripture- to take an image and see the relevance to ourselves. This is why the Bible writers make such allusions which may appear out of context when analyzed in literary, philological terms of exposition. But the Hebrew way of interpreting Scripture isn't always like this; the emphasis upon "context" can be taken too far, and it's more of a Western than an Eastern way of using literature.

8:9 Put forth his hand and pulled her- These are the very same Hebrew words as in Gen. 19:10, where the Angels put forth their hand and pull Lot into the house and shut the door, just as Noah had been Angelically 'shut in' the ark. The connection of thought may simply be to show that Noah rescued / saved the dove from endlessly flying over the wastage of the Gentile world, which connects with our thoughts above about how the dove represents God's wayward people returning to Him.

8:10 The Hebrew word translated "grieved" in 6:6 occurs here about Noah in Gen. 8:10: "And he stayed [s.w. to be grieved, hurt] yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark". This word is found translated in other places like this: "Be in anguish" (Dt. 2:25); "wounded" (1 Sam. 31:3); "exceedingly grieved" (Es. 4:4); "travaileth" (Job 15:20); "wounded" (1 Chron. 10:3); "sore pained within me" (Ps. 55:4); "I am pained at my heart" (Jer. 4:19); it is several times used of a woman "in pain", "travailing" in expectancy of the birth (Is. 26:17,18; 54:1; 66:7; Mic. 4:10). Why was Noah grieved and distressed, as he waited seven days before sending the dove out again? Surely for the plight of his world. He was hoping the dove would return with some sign of civilization, some hint of human survival. His grief was for the corpses floating, for the animals lost...for the world that once was. He had preached to them for 120 years, and they hadn't listened. Yet he didn't think Well that's their problem, they didn't want to hear when they could, it serves them right. And neither does it seem he was looking out of the ark window thinking My, I'm sure glad *we* were obedient. As the rain came down, it seems to me that the practical reality of the tragedy would have dawned upon Noah; as the waters rose, he would have pictured the folk he knew running to ever higher hills he would have seen the faces of local children, maybe those of

the guys he bought wood from, faces of the women his wife had bartered with, memories of his own brothers and sisters, perhaps his other children. It seems to me that he spent all that time in the ark grieving, grieving, grieving for the tragedy of it all. He surely wasn't smugly thinking Ha, serves them right, and praise God, I'm saved, and there's a great future Kingdom for me in store!. I also muse- and no more than this- that perhaps he went on a bender on coming out of the ark because he just couldn't handle the tragedy of it all. Walking around an empty earth knowing he was saved and the others hadn't made it... And this all has vital, biting relevance to us. For Peter takes Noah in the ark as a symbol of us all in Christ. Yes, he was there thanking God for His gracious salvation, looking forward to the new world to come, but distraught at the tragedy of those masses who hadn't responded, and who had died the slow, desperate, struggling death of drowning. He sent out the dove to see if the waters were " abated" - but the Hebrew word is usually translated " curse" ; he wanted to know if the curse was still evident; if the waters were cursed in the presence of the ground / earth. The same word is found in Gen. 8:21 " I will not again *curse* the ground" . If our concern for this world is genuine, if our preaching is not just seeking to gain members, or prove ourselves right and others wrong, then we will grieve for this world; even though the exclusion of some from Gods salvation is in some way their fault. Those who reject our message we will grieve and bleed for; not just shrug our shoulders over. Lack of response should concern us, worry us, *drive us* to think of how we could be the more persuasive of men.

8:11 Olive. Noah was a "herald of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5 Gk.). In the ancient world, heralds were associated with an olive branch or wand, e.g. Mercury the herald-god had an olive branch in his hand. Noah may therefore have understood from this that now he was indeed the herald of the new age of righteousness. But a herald worked to take messages between opposing parties and to reconcile them- the olive branch was thought to have power over warring snakes. Perhaps Noah was being reminded that his work wasn't over- it was for him to go forth from the ark and reconcile people to God. Instead he got drunk...

8:11 Olive- Israel being the land of olives (Dt. 8:8), this would be another indication that the flood was a local affair over the 'land' promised to Abraham. As olive trees don't grow near the present Ararat in Armenia, this lends support to the Jewish tradition that the olive came from the mount of Olives, and the 'ararat' / 'holy mount' upon which the ark landed was Mount Zion.

8:11 Leaf- s.w. branch. A broken off olive branch is exactly the figure Paul uses to describe Israel in Rom. 11:17-24. The whole story is a very detailed prefigurement of Israel's return from Gentile dispersion and Divine judgment, not simply to God, but into the Christ ark. Is. 54:9 encourages us to see things this way too, for the waters of the flood are there interpreted as God's wrath with Israel, and their cessation speaks of His eternal acceptance of them at their return to Him.

8:12 He stayed- s.w. to be patient, wait, trust. It's a different Hebrew word from that in Gen.

8:10, although there many versions also read “stayed”. There in 8:10 the Hebrew means to writhe, wriggle, twist in pain- rather indicating Noah’s impatience and dented faith. But now his patient waiting returns. This patient waiting for Christ’s Kingdom is of the essence (2 Thess. 3:5). Saul also tarried [s.w. Gen. 8:12] seven days, but he offered his sacrifice then rather than wait longer as Noah did to offer sacrifice (1 Sam. 13:8). Potentially encouragement had been set up for Saul, but he failed to take it. He was supposed to perceive the similarity in position between himself and Noah; but he failed to see it nor think himself into the situation.

8:13 dry- s.w. waste, destroyed, desolate. It was this which maybe made Noah depressed and turn to alcohol- for he loved people and so cared for them, and had sought their salvation in vain for 120 years.

8:17 Bring forth with thee [you singular]- Again, Noah is seen as the Saviour, with all the others saved due to being with him. We can in a sense save others by our witness, even though the Lord is their Saviour in the ultimate sense.

8:19 The order in which the animals are listed is different from that in 6:20; 7:21. Perhaps because in the ark they mixed together; our experience in the Christ ark should lead to unity.

8:20 Built an altar- This was on Noah’s initiative. There had been no altars stipulated previously. God had asked Noah to build an ark, and now Noah of his own volition builds an altar. As we mature in Christ, we no longer simply follow commands but take our own initiative in God’s service. Noah’s first reaction may have been to build a house for himself and his family; but he put God first and built an altar.

Again and again, Moses sought to refocus his people on the practical, the literal, the concrete, and away from the myths which surrounded them. And yet he does this by alluding to those myths, so as to alert Israel to the fact that the new, inspired record which he was writing was fully aware of the myths God's people were being assailed with. This would explain the similarity of expressions between some of the myths and the Genesis record- e.g. "The Lord smelled the pleasing odour" (Gen. 8:21) is very similar to the Gilgamesh Epic, 9.159-160: "The gods smelled the odour, the sweet odour".

8:21 Sweet savour - 'sweet' translates *nychoah*, related to the word 'Noah'. Noah was his sacrifice. Our lives are sacrifices being offered up. Just as the Lord Jesus was an offering of a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. 5:2). Noah was his sacrifice, as we are ours. We each have our unique smell to God.

8:21 Said in His heart- We may never know in this life God’s feelings in response to our sacrifices. We can touch the heart of God, we tiny mortals on earth...

8:21 Not again curse- alluded to in Rev. 21:1, there will be no more curse in God’s Kingdom. It seems Noah had the potential to enable the Kingdom there and then, as did so many-

Solomon, the Jews returning from exile, Israel in the first century. Every time, human weakness and shortsightedness stopped it.

8:21 For the imagination... - God as it were reduced His expectations, cut us yet more slack, made even bigger concessions to humanity.

8:22 Harvest... Winter- The reference to the seasons, planting etc. suggest this is relevant to the earth / land of Israel and not world-wide [there is no Summer and Winter on the equator]. God has emotion and it's hard to read this any other way than that He regretted how far He had punished humanity. This tension within God, between being immutable and yet being emotional, is impossible to ultimately explain.

9:1 Be fruitful- Remember that Noah had only produced three children in 600 years, and his sons had not had any children.

9:1 Replenish- s.w. Gen. 6:11,13 "filled" with violence. Is the implication that Noah's family were to fill the world with righteousness in place of the evil that had filled it? In this case, the subsequent failure of the family with sexuality and alcohol is a sad response to such a fine calling.

9:1 Note the similarities with Adam in Eden- replenish the earth (9:1 = Gen. 1:28); have dominion over animals (9:2 = Gen. 1:28); commanded what to eat (9:3 = Gen. 1:29); prohibition of some things which they were not to eat (9:4 = Gen. 2:16,17). Adam's sin, resulting in cursing, is matched by Noah's sin and the pronouncing of cursings. Yet again, the great potential for the Kingdom of God was spoilt by human weakness.

9:2 Fear... dread. This part of the promise seems only made to Noah and his sons in the context of the animals with whom they had contact in their work of replenishing the land / earth area which had been flooded. There are animals which don't fear people, and God brings this to our attention in the later chapters of Job. Thus the ostrich is "without fear... she scorns the horse and his rider" (Job 39:16,18); the horse "goes on to meet the armed men. He mocks at fear, neither is affrighted (Job 39:21-24); behemoth and leviathan [the hippopotamus and crocodile?] are portrayed as fearless of men, indeed it is men who fear them (Job 40,41). The "fear and dread" of humans which fell on the animals after the flood is clearly linkable with the "fear and dread" which was to come upon the inhabitants of Canaan due to the Israelites (Gen. 9:2 = Dt. 1:21; 3:8; 11:25).

9:3 Every moving thing... shall be meat for you. There was no distinction between clean and unclean animals, which could be eaten and which couldn't. There are therefore no animals unclean of themselves; the Mosaic laws concerning them were therefore only to teach an object lesson, rather than being a reflection upon any intrinsic uncleanness of any specific animals.

9:5 Will I require- God's judgment is ongoing, He has not as it were switched off and will only open the books at the last day. Ps. 9:10-12 says that when God makes "inquisition [s.w. 'require'] for blood, He remembers those who "seek" [s.w. 'require'] for Him. He seeks and searches us out, holding us accountable for actions; and yet we are to seek after Him. And thus we meet... The verse means that God requires life from us- the Lord Jesus alludes here when He spoke of how the soul of a man would be "required" at the day of his death (Lk. 12:20), and woe to us if we have only 'bigger barns', petty materialistic acquisition, to show for it. If we take another's life, that life will be required of us- because of the general principle, that God 'requires' human life from us. So the principle is that we should not merely avoid taking the life of another; we should give our lives back to God, knowing that life is required of us.

9:6 For in the image of God- As James 3:9; the fact humans are made in God's image means we should perceive the value and meaning of persons, from not killing to holding the door open for people... Defacing God's image earns death. In what ways can we destroy the image of God in others apart from by killing them? Any form of dehumanizing surely does the same. Because we are made in God's image, we should therefore not *kill* other humans (Gen. 9:6). James says the same, in essence, in teaching that because we are in God's image, we shouldn't *curse* others. To curse a man is to kill him. That's the point of James' allusion to Genesis and to God as creator. Quite simply, respect for the person of others is inculcated by sustained reflection on the way that they too are created in God's image.

9:9 My covenant- Covenants were two way agreements, with conditions for both parties and a token of the covenant. All the elements of a covenant are present- apart from the conditions for the other party, i.e. Noah. God's covenant is of grace- He binds Himself to certain things, without any corresponding demands upon Noah.

9:9 With you – Repeated in 9:11. The covenant wasn't with humanity generally but to the children of Noah.

9:10 Every beast- God is in covenant relationship with the animals.

9:11 "Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (Gen. 9:11) sounds as if destruction of the earth by flooding had happened several times before. It's almost as if the God of all grace is showing Himself progressively gracious to earth's inhabitants: 'I've done it before several times, but now I promise you humans, you new race of inhabitants upon whom my special love is to be shown through My Son, that I'll never do it again'.

The Babylonian Epic Of Creation (6.82) claims that after Marduk's victory, he set his bow in the sky and it became a constellation. He also supposedly used his bow to shoot arrows at the clouds which caused the deluge. "So, too, the pagan Arabs related of one of their gods that after discharging arrows from his bow, he set his bow in the cloud". These myths are alluded to and corrected by the statement that God's bow is simply the rainbow (Gen. 9:13), a purely natural phenomenon which is merely an optical feature and certainly not a literal bow of any god. Yahweh's bow, the rainbow, is a symbol of His grace and love towards His creatures. The later Old Testament repeatedly uses the idea of the true God shooting His arrows as a figure of His judgment of His enemies and salvation of

His people (Hab. 3:9,11; Zech. 9:14; Ps. 38:2; 64:8; 77:17; 144:6; Job 6:4; Lam. 2:4; 3:12). The whole mythical, pagan idea of a god having a literal bow and arrows is thereby deconstructed. The question arises, however, as to why Moses is alluding to Babylonian myths which were current only centuries after his time. My response is threefold. Firstly, God could have inspired Moses to speak in terms which would later take on relevance to the myths which God foresaw would arise. Secondly, the Babylonian myths may well have developed from myths which were current in Moses' time. A third possibility is that the Pentateuch was re-written under Divine inspiration whilst Judah were in captivity in Babylon, and the historical accounts presented in such a way as to have relevance to the Marduk worship and other Babylonian mythology which surrounded God's people in Babylonian captivity. I have given further evidence for this possibility elsewhere.

9:13-17 Rainbows being experienced worldwide doesn't mean that the flood was therefore global. Moses under inspiration wrote for the Israelites, to enable them to make sense of their world, and he explained to them that they were to understand that the world wouldn't be destroyed by *water* again. However 2 Peter 3 seems to say that the heavens and earth of Peter's time would be destroyed not by water but by fire, after the pattern of what God did at Noah's time. This passage has some relevance to AD70- which was a destruction of the Jewish system in the land of Israel, not worldwide.

There's another way to read Gen. 9:13-17 which I offer not in any dogmatism but for reflection. It may not mean that God intends us to look at rainbows and remember His covenant; it may be that God sealed the covenant He made at that time by bringing a cloud over the earth and displaying in it a bow or arrow [the Heb. translated "bow" also means an arrow and is thus translated in places]. God set or "hung up" [the Hebrew is translated that way elsewhere] His bow- as if to say, 'My bow and arrows are now hung up. I'm through with judgment by this flood. It's over. I've hung up My bow / arrows'. YHWH shooting arrows is a figure for His judgment in later Scripture. So it's a bit of an assumption that God's talking about rainbows here. A Divine covenant was typically sealed by a one-time token, e.g. His covenant with Abraham by the token of passing between the animal pieces. The token of a covenant was therefore a one-time act, not something like rainbows which are ongoing. The covenant was between God and Noah and also all animal flesh on the earth at that time. The token of that covenant was therefore relevant to Noah not humanity generally. So it would make sense if there was some theophany to Noah involving awesome clouds and a special display of God's now hung up bow / arrow over it. God set His bow in that cloud, the record states. But rainbows don't exist at any location in the clouds; they are an optical phenomenon in the eye of the observer.

God did this so as to "remember" His covenant; but "remember" carries the idea of God marking it, this is what He did to mark the covenant He had just made as a one time demonstration to Noah. Surely it can't mean that whenever God sends rain, He sees the rainbow and remembers in the sense of "Ah yes, now I remember, I'm not supposed to use rain to kill people". People still die by flooding today and I guess some of them drown within sight of rainbows... and the survivors likely watch rainbows as they mourn their dead. The literalistic readings of the rainbow seem to create more questions than they solve. They also depend upon the assumption that there were no rainbows before the flood, and this was a special creation; but rainbows are observed in mist [e.g. over waterfalls or wave spray] as well as rain clouds so I somewhat doubt there were no rainbows seen before the flood. It's also an assumption that there was no rain before the flood- Gen. 2:5 simply states that before the creation of Adam there was no rain, possibly implying that the created plants didn't grow until Adam was created to tend them.

9:14 When I bring a cloud- some foreshadowing of the bringing of a cloud at the crucifixion?

The idea of the rainbow being a 'reminder' to God not to destroy the earth again with a flood is rather hard to understand when applied to God. But if this is a reminder to the Angels, who brought the flood in the first place, this makes more sense (Gen. 9:16).

The Gilgamesh Epic specifically records that Utnapistim gave the workmen wine to drink whilst they built the ark (Tablet 9, lines 72-73). The Biblical account appears to consciously contradict this by stating that Noah was the first to make wine- and he did this *after* the flood (Gen. 9:20).

9:21 Drunk- See on 8:10. There's a juxtaposition here between God's wonderful covenant being followed by Noah getting drunk in response to it. He gets blind drunk right after being given a wonderful, one sided covenant of Divine grace. We too find it hard to cope with the huge import of God's grace. It's not something we merely accept with a smile, thinking "Oh how sweet". The enormity of it is riveting and very demanding. And Noah couldn't handle it. Surely Noah knew all about alcohol, for his generation were partying right up until the flood came. If they had developed iron smelting technology by Gen. 5, they surely knew about alcohol. Noah maybe had weaknesses which aren't recorded in the record of his earlier life. Peter reasons that God saved Noah by the flood (1 Pet. 3:20,21); God saved Lot by destroying Sodom and Noah by destroying his surrounding world, because He knows how to deliver the godly from temptations (2 Pet. 2:5-9). It could be that had God not done this, they too would've been caught up in the evil around them, so powerful was it. Hence Is. 54:9 speaks of the flood as "the waters of Noah". It was Noah's flood, the flood required for him, as well as to judge the world. HE was saved by grace rather than his good works (Gen. 6:8). The Mesopotamian myths speak of how the hero of the flood (cp. Noah in the Biblical account) was raised to divine, immortal status. Gen. 9:29 comments simply upon Noah: "And he died". In the myth of Utnapishtim, the one who survives the flood is turned into a hero and becomes a god. But of course Moses' inspired record is different. The flood story ends with Noah dying- not becoming a god. And Noah not only remains human, but he remains *very* human- because he goes out and gets blind drunk after he comes out of the ark. Moses' point is surely to show that real human lives really do intersect with Almighty God's work, words and actions.

9:23 Covered- a related word to the 'covering' of the ark (Gen. 8:13). As they had been covered by God and thus saved, so they sought to cover the sin of another. Our experience of covering in Christ should be similar, not gossiping of others' sin but seeking to cover it (s.w. Prov. 17:9; 10:12; 11:13). There is a direct allusion to this incident in Prov. 12:16: "A prudent man covers [s.w.] shame". What they did to Noah is what we should do in response to our covering / atonement in Christ. Covering others' sin isn't the same as turning a blind eye to it; it involves conscious forgiveness, but then the covering of it in the sense that God also covers sin and doesn't mention it against us ever again.

9:23 their faces were backward- s.w. Ex. 33:23, where God hides His face from Moses and only His "back" is seen. The verbal similarities between the two incidents are pointed. Perhaps Moses in recording this incident is suggesting that he felt like drunken Noah, and God showed the same grace to him as Noah's sons showed to their drunken father by not looking upon his sin and nakedness.

9:25 Canaan- Noah thrice rails against Canaan (:26,27). Why, seeing that the shame had been done to him by Ham, Canaan's father? This seems a classic example of transference- people often focus their anger not against the one who has hurt them, but against that person's relative, family or cause. We should deal with persons directly, perceiving the value and meaning of the human person; and not deflect the relationship onto others as Noah appears to have done. The curses placed by Noah have no fulfilment [contrary to many racist and

misguided attempts to force such a fulfilment]. The story ends with a huge spiritual anticlimax, although later reference to Noah shows that he was judged faithful overall.

Gen. 10- the 70 nations, see on Ex. 24:9-11

Moses' words in Genesis deconstruct later Babylonian myths. Perhaps the clearest case of this is in the record of Babel. The Babylonian myths boasted of the building of the city of Babylon and its tower / ziggurat. The tower of Babel was built in a plain (Gen. 11:2); and both Strabo and Herodotus mention that Babylon was built in a wide plain. The record of the tower being built with bricks is so similar to the Babylonian *Epic Of Creation*, Tablet 6, lines 58-61, which held that "For a year [the gods] made bricks" to build the ziggurat of Babylon. Their myths claimed that after the deluge, humanity came to Babylon and the Anunnaki deities, who had supported Marduk in his battle, built the city. But Gen. 11:5 labours that it was "the sons of men" who built Babel. Cassuto describes the Genesis record as "a kind of satire on what appeared to be a thing of beauty and glory in the eyes of the Babylonians". The phrase "city and tower" is so often found in Babylonian writings with reference to Babylon; but the phrase is used of Babel in Gen. 11:4. The temple of Marduk in Babylon had a sanctuary, the Esagila- "the house whose head is in heaven" and a tower called Etemenanki, "the house of the foundation of heaven and earth". Marduk supposedly lived on the seventh storey. The Babylonian inscriptions speak of the ziggurat tower as having its top in Heaven. The Genesis record deconstructs all this. The tower of Babel was built by sinful *men* and not gods; the one true God came *down* to view the tower- its top did *not* reach to Heaven, and there is a powerful word play on the word Babylon, meaning 'the gate of Heaven' in their language, and yet 'Babel', the equivalent Hebrew word, means 'confusion'. What the Babylonians thought was so great was in God's eyes and those of His people the Hebrews simply confusion and failure. The Genesis record goes on to show how that it was Abraham who had a great name made for himself (Gen. 12:2), whereas the Babel builders failed in their desire to make a permanent name for themselves. God's intention that mankind should spread out and fill the earth after the flood did eventually triumph over the builders of Babel-Babylon who tried to thwart it. Zeph. 3:9-11 allude to the Babel record- at the time of Judah's restoration from Babylon, it was God's intention to undo the effects of Babel and "change the speech of the peoples to a pure [united] speech, that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering". Those dispersed would then gather as one, i.e. Babel would be reversed.

Gen. 11:5 "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower" (of Babel), as if He had to search and come to have a closer look; this 'language of limitation' may refer to the Angels rather than God personally. "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded" – surely this language of limitation must be concerning the Angels, seeing that God is aware of all things. The Angelic response was "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (Gen. 11:5,7). This recalls the Angels' words of Gen. 1:26 "Let us make man in our image"- see notes there.

The genealogies of Genesis 11 reveal how some human lives repeat according to the same outline schema. Thus both Arphaxsad and Shelah each lived 403 years after the births of the eldest sons; Shelah, Peleg and Serug were each 30 when their first sons were born. Abraham and Shem both had sons at 100 years old (Gen. 11:10). And it is the very nature of Christian fellowship that God has arranged that our human lives likewise have elements of amazing similarity of pattern.

The fact has to be faced that Abram was called to leave his country and kindred (his fellow countrymen), but when he left Ur his countrymen came with him. And additionally, " *Terah took Abram...to go into the land of Canaan*" (Gen.11:31). Abram did not respond *immediately* and *completely* to God's command. The call of Abram is an essay in partial response. Yet we know he had faith. Terah was an idolater (Josh.24:2); the command to leave was given to Abram, not Terah. Because God was going to promise Abram a massive new family stemming from *him*, he therefore had to come out from his own natural family. He was going to be promised many descendants- therefore he had to separate himself from his " father's house" or posterity. He was to be promised a land for eternal inheritance- therefore he had to leave his own native land. And in this life, Abram's seed must separate themselves from their present, worldly inheritance if they are to receive the promised blessings. It was therefore imperative that to receive the promises, Abram must separate from his natural family and land inheritance. There seems little doubt, in the light of this, that it was God's intention for Abram to leave Ur *and* his natural family, just taking his wife and their children with them. Yet Abram did not do this. And yet he had faith!

There are marked similarities between the record of the exodus from Ur, and that of the call of Abram to leave Haran:

Gen.11:31	Gen.12:5
Terah took	Abram took
Sarai...Abram's wife	Sarai his wife
Lot the son of Haran	Lot his brother's son
They went forth from Ur	They went forth (from Haran)
To go into the land of Canaan	To go into the land of Canaan
They came unto Haran	Into the land of Canaan they came.

These similarities may mean that the same processes occurred in each move- a word of promise made, Abram struggling to show his abundant faith in that promise and call, and the providence of God acting to make his expression of faith possible. There may also be the hint that when Abram left Haran, he still had the same fundamental problem as when leaving Ur- he had still not fully left his kindred and father's house. It has been pointed out that around the time Terah and Abraham left Ur, the city was threatened by and then destroyed by the Elamites. It could well be that the motive for leaving Ur in the first place was therefore mixed- it was fleeing from a material threat more than plain obedience to a Divine command. This would explain why the family settled in relatively nearby Haran, and remained there for so long. See on 20:13.

Terah and his family departed "to go into the land of Canaan" (Gen. 11:31). These are the same Hebrew words as in the command to Abram: "Get thee out of thy country" (Gen. 12:1). We can therefore conclude that Abram received this call to quit his country, but didn't obey it, until some unrecorded situation led his father to announce the family's emigration to Canaan. Abram was therefore very slow to obey the call. Note too that the command to Abram had been to leave his land and also his "kindred and... father's house". This he didn't do- for he left Ur with his father and brothers, i.e. his kindred. His brother Haran died, and his father then died in Haran, where they

temporarily lived on the way to Canaan. We see here how God seeks to almost make us obedient. And Gen. 15:7 records that it was God who brought Abram out of Ur- even though Abraham failed to rise up and be obedient in his own strength, God manipulated family circumstances to make him obedient to the call; and in essence He does this for us too.

Immediately Terah died, Abram may have felt he had truly left his "kindred" and eagerly moved on towards the promised land of Canaan (so Gen.11:32-12:4 implies). It is likely that many of Abram's "kindred" would have come along with Terah, responding themselves to the call of Abram. Presumably they settled in Haran after Terah's death. It is even possible that the family were from this city originally, seeing that Abraham's brother was called Haran. We saw earlier that just before leaving Haran, Abram was further told to separate from his "father's house" too, i.e. *all* of his father's household. This must have included Lot. Abram could understand separation from his idolatrous father and the rest of the family retinue; yet Lot was "a righteous man"; Abram evidently rated Lot's spirituality (Gen.18:23,32). Again, Abram was in a quandary. He had left all but one of his father's house in Haran. Was he really intended to separate from his father's house to the extent of leaving Lot too? It is likely that Abram often agonized about Lot. There he was in Canaan, knowing that his seed would inherit this land, which was then full of Canaanites (the record twice emphasizes, in 12:6 and 13:7). But Lot, part of his kindred and father's house, was still with him. We saw that the Hebrew for "kindred" implies one born in one's own country. A closely related word is found in Gen.11:28, describing how Haran, Lot's father, "died in the *land of his nativity*, in Ur". If Lot's father lived and died in Ur, it is fair to assume that Lot was born in Ur. So Abram knew he must separate from Lot, his "kindred" - but how? What reason could he give Lot? Yet he had faith in what God had told him; therefore he *wanted* to leave Lot, but just found it hard to do. And so God made a way.

Abraham was told "Get thee out..." of Ur; and obediently "they *went forth* to go *into* the land of Canaan: and *into* the land of Canaan they came" (Gen. 12:1,5). Holiness means a separation *from* and also *unto*. This must be the pattern of our lives, until finally at the Lord's return we are again called to *go out* to meet the bridegroom; and we will *go in* with Him to the marriage (Mt. 25:6,10). The New Testament preachers urged men to turn "*from* darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18); *from* wickedness to God, to the Lord (Acts 3:26; 15:19; 26:20; 9:35; 11:21).

The first promise to Abraham was actually conditional- if he did these things, then "I will make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 12:2). If he left his natural kindred, then God would give him a huge new family. But he hardly fulfilled those conditions, and yet still the promises were ultimately fulfilled to him. And he is set up as the "father of the faithful". We all know that really our faith is pathetically weak, and this recognition can cause some to stumble altogether.

Gen. 12:3 states that through Abraham, all the offspring of the earth / *adamah* were to be blessed. This is an evident allusion back to the cursing of the *adamah* / earth in Eden (Gen. 3:17). The implication was that the promised seed of the woman, who was to be the way of escape from that curse, was to somehow be "in Abraham". Although there's no mention yet of a specific son or seed, it seems to me that God was setting Abraham up to meditate upon the promise of the earth being blessed "in him", and figure out that this must mean that he was to have a descendant or son who would be the Saviour. Perhaps the subsequent specific promises about this were as it were God's

reward for Abraham following through with where God was leading him. Gen. 28:14 makes explicit that the blessing of the *adamah* was to be "in thy seed". I firmly believe, indeed have experienced, the way in which God prompts our minds to think of something, to work something through, and then reveals this specifically, or confirms our understanding, directly from His word. In our day and context, it would seem that daily reading of God's word is what's required in order to 'allow' as it were this process to happen. This, surely, is how God seeks to work out the same process with us as He did with Abraham. Even if at the time of reading we feel we 'get nothing out of that chapter', there will be prompts to thought and later reflection which are all in God's longer term educational purpose with us. Heb. 11:33 says that the likes of Abraham obtained promises by their faith. Yet the Old Testament record clearly enough states that the promises were just given to them by God; they weren't requested by the patriarchs. Indeed, David was surprised at the promises God chose to make to him. Conclusion? God read their unspoken, unprayed for desires for Messiah and His Kingdom as requests for the promises- and responded.

The comment "So Abram departed [Heb. 'went'- s.w. Gen. 11:31; 12:1], as the Lord had spoken unto him" (Gen. 12:4) is surely the beginning of the wonderful theme of righteousness being imputed to Abraham! Heb. 11:8 records things from a positive perspective too, as if there was instant obedience from Abraham: "By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went". Truly, the Biblical record imputes righteousness to Abraham, and thus sets a pattern for all of us, the equally faltering and stumbling children of Abraham.

Grammatically, Gen. 12:3 can be read as passive ("be blessed", as AV, RV) or reflexive "bless themselves" (as RSV), i.e. implying those blessed have to do something to appropriate the blessing. In this we see how God will play His part, but we must play our part. And yet the covenant in Gen. 15 was one way, unconditional, from God to us. It's as if *His* part in our salvation is so much greater than our response. Yet there is still an obvious element of choice which we have to make. The way Gen. 12:1-3 is structured implies that Abraham receives an unconditional blessing, yet he therefore is to go forth and "be a blessing". And it's the same for us- and note how the "blessing" is interpreted as forgiveness in Acts 3:27-29. We are to forgive and generally bless others, in all forms of gracious generosity, as God has blessed us.

God promises to bless *them* (plural) who bless Abraham, and curse *him* (singular) who curse Abraham (Gen. 12:3). In other words, the blessings are to come specifically and individually to many people; whereas those who curse Abraham and his seed are just treated as one homogenous mass.

All that said, Abram's leaving of Haran was still a great act of faith- he had "gathered" much in the years of staying in Haran (Gen. 12:5). According to Jewish tradition, Abraham stayed 23 years in Haran. All he had to go on was a word from the Lord which he'd received some years ago whilst living in Ur. There's no reason to think that Angels regularly appeared to him and kept urging him to leave, or that he could read the Lord's word in written form as we can. Presumably that one word which he received worked in his conscience, until he said to the family "Right, we're quitting this nice life for a wilderness journey to some place I don't know". We can underestimate the power of "just" one word from the Lord. We're so familiar with possessing His entire word in written form that we can forget the need to be obedient to just one of those words, to the extent of losing all we once held dear... In this I find Abraham a wonderful example. He must, presumably, have wondered

whether he really had heard right, whether the whole thing wasn't just a weird dream- just as we may wonder whether *really* we are supposed to take God's word as it is and allow it to radically upset our settled, mediocre lives.

We read of all the substance that Abram had *gathered* in Haran (12:5); the Hebrew for "gathered" implies an element of hoarding and materialism. It only occurs in passages concerning the patriarchs, as if to show that this was one of their characteristics. Gen.31:18 comments on Jacob using his own wit and cunning to accumulate material wealth: "he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had *gotten*, the cattle of his getting, which he had *gotten*". The humanness of all this is strongly hinted at in 30:43: "The *man* increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels and asses". This list is identical to that in 24:35 concerning Abraham. Jacob and Sons left Canaan with "their cattle, and their goods, which they had *gotten*" (46:6). Esau too piled up his possessions; 36:6 speaks of his sons, daughters, servants, cattle, beasts, "and all his substance which he had *got* in the land of Canaan". The way this Hebrew word for materialistic accumulation is used only about the Abraham family ought to be seen by us as a flashing light, pointing us to a definite characteristic in all of them. Against this background we can better appreciate Abraham's faith that he did now possess the land.

God's promise to Abraham was made more specifically at "the oak of Moreh" (Gen. 12:6)- evidently a Canaanite shrine; and it's emphasized that "the Canaanite was then in the land". It's as if God's invitation to Abraham to have a unique relationship with Him was made amidst the calls and presence of many other gods, and in the thick of the Gentile world.

Progressive appreciation of the Lord Jesus can be seen in the lives of Paul, Peter and many others. But it has been pointed out by David Levin that Abraham's appreciation of the promises relating to the Christ-seed also grew over time. When the promise was first given, he seems to have assumed it referred to his adopted son, Lot. Thus Abraham offered Lot the land which had been promised to Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:7 cp. chapter 13). But after Lot returned to Sodom, Abraham looked to his servant Eliezer as his heir / seed (Gen. 15:2,3). Thus God corrected him, in pointing out that the seed would be from Abraham's own body (15:4). And so Abraham thought of Ishmael, who was a son from his own body (although Yahweh didn't specify who the mother would be). When Abraham's body became dead, i.e. impotent, he must have surely concluded that Ishmael was the son promised. But again, Abraham was told that no, Ishmael was not to be the seed; and finally God told Abraham that Sarah would have a child. Their faith was encouraged by the incidents in Egypt which occurred straight after this, whereby Abraham prayed for Abimelech's wives and slaves so that they might have children- and he was heard. Finally, Isaac was born. It was clear that this was to be the seed. But that wasn't all. Abraham in his final and finest spiritual maturity came to the understanding that the seed was ultimately the Lord Jesus Christ. He died in wondrous appreciation of the Saviour seed and the way of forgiveness enabled through Him. Note the huge paradox in the promises- a paradox of grace which comes true in some form for all those who receive them.

Perhaps it's worth suggesting that there may be an intended contrast between Abraham *building* an altar in recognition of the promises, at the same time as he *pitched* his tent (Gen. 12:7,8)- as if to highlight the temporal nature of our present material situation in contrast to the permanence of the things we stand related to in God's promises.

God's grace shines through again and again. Abraham went down into Egypt because of how "grievous" or 'heavy' the famine was; and comes up out of Egypt, thanks to betraying his wife, "heavy" [same Hebrew word] with riches (Gen. 12:10; 13:2). Everything he did was blessed, despite his weakness.

Throughout the records of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children there is continual repetition in the manner in which the record is written. This repetition is of both experiences (e.g. lying concerning their wives: 12:13; 20:3,13; 26:7) and of the language used to describe those experiences.

Straight after receiving the promises, Abraham goes down to Egypt [an act with spiritually negative overtones], and lies about his wife. Not only does he show a strange lack of protection for her, but his actions reflect a weakened faith in God's promises to him. For if Abraham was to have died at the hands of jealous Egyptians at that stage, how would the promises to him be fulfilled? In urging Sarah to deny she was his wife, Abraham comments to her in Gen. 12:13: "my soul shall live because of thee". Ps. 33:18,19 appears to comment upon this: "Behold, the eye of Jehovah (Angelic language- and Abraham dealt with Angels) is upon them that fear him, Upon them that hope in his lovingkindness; to deliver their soul from death, And to keep them alive in famine (Abraham told the lie he did about Sarah because he trusted in Egypt to keep him alive in famine). Our soul hath waited for Jehovah: He is our help and our shield"- and it is God, not Sarah, who is described as Abraham's shield (same Hebrew word) in Gen. 15:1.

12:16- see on 14:22

The reference to Abram pitching his tent between Bethel ['the house of God'] and Hai ['the house of ruin'] could imply that he was caught between the two- his faith was not firmly decided (Gen. 13:3).

"Strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle" (Gen.13:7).

Because the promises were to be made to Abram and not Lot, this separation was indeed necessary (although nothing should be inferred from this regarding Lot's spirituality or standing with God). It is stressed in the record that "Lot went with him" out of Haran (Gen.12:4), and that in Abram's subsequent passing through the land of Canaan, " Lot...went with Abram" (Gen.13:5; 13:1). Having been through so much together (they were together in the Egypt crisis, Gen.13:1), it is unlikely that they would suffer from a personality clash. Yet the great wealth of them both resulted in "strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle, and the herdmen of Lot's cattle" (Gen.13:7). Abram reasoned that it would be a shame to let this incident between their employees drive a wedge between them personally; " for we be brethren" (note Abram's intense awareness that they were of the same household), and close spiritual friends too, it may be inferred (Gen.19:8). Abram's subsequent concern for Lot indicates that they did not fall out personally over the problem.

Abram would have noticed Lot's desire to settle down in the cities of the plain. Now he saw that providence was giving him the means he needed to separate from his father's house completely. He knew that if Lot chose, of his own volition, to separate from him, then there would no longer be the emotional agony of him separating from Lot. " Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me" , Abram invited Lot, knowing that now it was very easy and attractive for Lot to agree (Gen.13:9). " And they separated themselves the one from the other" (Gen.13:11). Yet a third time the record emphasizes their separation, and implies that as soon as this occurred, the full Abrahamic land covenant was made, featuring Abram's eternal inheritance of the land: " The Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot

was separated from him...all the land which thou seest, to *thee* will I give it, and to *thy* seed for ever" (Gen.13:14,15). Again we see God's patience in the development of Abram's faith.

In Gen. 13:9, Abraham gives Lot the choice as to what land he would like to live in. Lot was the orphaned nephew of Abraham- such magnanimity would've been unheard of in those societies, for the elder to give the junior dependent such a choice. The elder in the relationship would've chosen the best for himself, and that was that. It seems to me that Abraham's unusual attitude in this matter was a direct outcome of his faith in the promise that the whole land really would one day be given to *him*. If we have the faith of Abraham... we won't fight for our corner in this world. It'll be so much easier to 'let go' as Abraham did, and take an attitude to material wealth and possessions which is radically counter-cultural in *our* societies. The way that Lot lifted up his eyes and looked around the land is matched by the way in which God then bids Abraham to likewise lift up his eyes and view the very same territory which Lot had just chosen (Gen. 13:10,14)- and was told that the land which Lot had chosen, along with all other land, would be Abraham's eternally. When God told Abraham at this point "All the land that you *see*, I will give it to you and your seed for ever" (Gen. 13:15), He was alluding to what He had initially told Abram back in Ur: "Get thee out... unto a land that I will *shew* (s.w. "see" in 13:15) you" (Gen. 12:1). It was as if God was saying: 'Well Abraham, this is it. This is the land I told you about'- and yet the best of it has now been given to Lot! The whole thing could have seemed some kind of cruel, just as many of our life experiences do. Abraham had given up all, made a long and dangerous journey, to receive a land from God- and when he arrives there, the best of it is given to his younger relative. But God's purpose was to focus Abraham's faith upon the fact that he would *eternally* inherit this land. And so it is with many of the twists and turns of our lives which can appear nothing but cruel fate to the unbelieving observer.

The Hebrew phrase "to lift up the eyes" is used very extensively about the Abraham family. Most Bible characters have the term used at most once or twice about them; but the Genesis record emphasizes this characteristic of this family. It's as if we're being bidden to really visualize them as a family, and to enable this we're even given an insight into their body language. Consider the emphasis on the way this family had of lifting up their eyes:

Lot lifted up his eyes (Gen. 13:10)

Abraham lifted up his eyes (Gen. 13:14)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and noticed the Angels (Gen. 18:2)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place of sacrifice (Gen. 22:4)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the ram caught (Gen. 22:13)

Isaac lifted up his eyes and saw camels coming on which Rebekah was riding (Gen. 24:63)

Rebekah, as part of a marriage made in Heaven, lifted up *her* eyes and saw Isaac at the same moment (Gen. 24:64)

Jacob lifted up his eyes and saw the vision of the speckled cattle (twice recorded- Gen. 31:10,12)

Jacob lifted up his eyes and saw Esau coming (Gen. 33:1)

Esau lifted up his eyes and saw Jacob's family (Gen. 33:5)

Jacob's sons lifted up their eyes and saw the traders coming (Gen. 37:25)

Joseph lifted up his eyes and saw Benjamin (Gen. 43:29)

Of course the classic epitome of this feature is when Abraham lifts up his eyes to Heaven and is asked to count the stars, and there and then believes God's word of promise that "so shall thy seed be". Yet *we*, as Abraham's family, his children by faith, are likewise asked [with the same Hebrew

words] to lift up *our* eyes to Heaven and consider the stars, and take strength from the fact that their creator is our God (Is. 40:26; 51:6; 60:4).

God never let go of Abraham, even when Abraham didn't readily obey what God required of him. He was told to "walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for [because] I will give it unto you" (Gen. 13:17). But Abraham didn't willingly do this- because perhaps he doubted that he would be given it. It's like saying to a child: 'Come and look at this! I am going to give it to you!', and the child doesn't even want to look. In this context we read of how Abraham "*dwelt* in the plain of Mamre"- that's stressed twice (Gen. 13:18; 14:13). Instead of travelling around in his land to see it, he tried to settle down. But God brought circumstances into his life which made him travel around the length and breadth of Canaan- thus Abraham had to pursue Lot's captors "unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus" before he recovered Lot (Gen. 14:15). Hobah is in the far north east of Canaan- Abraham had to go all the way there from Mamre in the centre of Canaan. For unknown reasons, Abraham also lived in Beersheba for a while (Gen. 22:19); he had a meeting with the local rulers at Shaveh, near Jerusalem (Gen. 14:17); and at the time of Gen. 16:14 Abraham was near Kadesh Barnea, in the very South of Canaan on the Egyptian border. One wonders whether the attraction of Egypt had led him there once more- in which case it was his own weakness which was used by God to ensure that he travelled to the very south of Canaan. Maybe the record includes all these geographical markers in order to demonstrate how Abraham did indeed travel around Canaan through providentially arranged circumstances, although not it seems as an act of direct obedience to the Divine command to do so.

Abraham's belief in *God's* blessing of him is reflected in the way he is insistent to the King of Sodom that he will not take any of the spoil, lest anyone should think that man rather than God had blessed Abraham (Gen. 14:22). It could be pointed out that this rather contrasts with his not returning to Pharaoh the things he gave him in return for Sarah becoming his wife (Gen. 12:16). Perhaps Abraham later reflected upon his failure in this incident, realizing he'd not displayed faith in *God's* blessing of him... and learnt his lesson when the same temptation occurred in Gen. 14 to be made rich by the men of this world. Our stumbling response to the same Abrahamic promises often develops in the same way.

Abraham's focus on material issues can be discerned from the double description of how he pursued after his captured nephew Lot, "and he brought back all the goods, and his brother Lot, and his goods" (Gen. 14:16). Abraham's concern about the "goods" is perhaps significant. And yet given this mindset, it is to Abraham's credit that he utterly refuses to take even a "shoe latchet" of the spoil lest it be said that any man had made him rich- he knew that it was *God* who had made him rich (Gen. 14:23), and Abraham wanted the world to know that. I also note the way that Abraham speaks of how he is the servant of the God who is the *purchaser* of Heaven and earth, i.e. the land which God had potentially given Abraham (Gen. 14:22- the Hebrew translated "possessor" in the AV is usually translated 'buyer' elsewhere). Ps. 74:2 and Ps. 78:54 use the same word to describe how the land God gave Israel had been "purchased" by Him. Perhaps there is here a recognition by Abraham that God's gifts to us cost Him something. He had meditated upon the promise of the land, and concluded that God was giving him something which had cost Him. Perhaps this may even indicate that Abraham had reflected that the promise of the land was on account of God's willingness to purchase it through the death of the "seed of the woman" promised in Genesis 3... At the very least,

we need to ask ourselves how much we have meditated upon the implications of the same Abrahamic promises which have been made to us. And we likewise must avoid the assumption that because God owns all things, therefore it's painless for Him to give them to us. Poor people often assume that it's painless and effortless for a rich person to give them something- but actually it isn't. And we need to perceive the same about our wonderfully generous Father in Heaven. We are slaves now, owning nothing, but then we will be gloriously free (Rom. 8:21). So this idea of owning nothing, not even ourselves, is only true of this life; the day of release from slavery will dawn, we will receive that true freedom and that true concept of personal possession- if *now* we resign it. Abraham really grasped this idea that we now can own nothing. He swore to Yahweh as "the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine..." (Gen. 14:22,23). He knew that Yahweh is the owner of all, and *therefore* he was not going to yield to the temptation to increase what appeared to be 'his' possessions.

The promises to Abraham were extended in Genesis 15, with more specifics added about the "seed". But the context of the giving of those promises is again Abraham's weakness. After the conflict with the surrounding kings recorded in Genesis 14, Abraham is comforted: "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield" (Gen. 15:1)- as if Abram was starting to doubt in God's continued ability to protect him. God's assurances continued: "I am thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). The Hebrew mind would've understood "reward" in this context to refer to children- Ps. 127:3 is explicit: "Children are the inheritance given by the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (s.w.). The "reward" is paralleled with the inheritance of children given by God. Jer. 31:16 likewise speaks of a woman bereft of her children being "rewarded" with more children. Yet Abraham doesn't just accept that on faith. He speaks as if he somehow didn't believe that those promises meant that he personally would have a child; for his response is to say: "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless... Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in my house is mine heir" (Gen. 15:3,4). It's as if Abram were saying 'OK, I hear You, but whatever these promises of Yours mean, reality is, I am old and childless... can't You find a way to give me children?'. "Since I *continue* [Heb.] childless" indicates his frustration. God had already promised to "give" the land to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:7; 13:15); and now Abraham complains that God hasn't 'given' [s.w.] him a seed. One can possibly detect an anger with God, at best a frustration, when he comments that all he has is his steward Eliezer ("this Eliezer of Damascus") as "the son of my house / family" (Gen. 15:2, Heb. *ben bayith*, son of my family)- as if to say 'All this You've promised me- is to go to *him*, is *this* guy to be this wonderful promised seed, and I for now get nothing? Was that the whole purpose of calling me out of Ur?'.

One of the strongest of the Abraham family's characteristics was fear, almost to the extent of psychiatric paranoia. Abraham (15:1; 20:11), Hagar (21:17), Lot (19:30), Sarah (18:15), Isaac (26:7,24; 31:42, 53, Jacob (32:7,11; 46:3; 28:17; 31:31), his sons (42:35; 43:18,23; 50:21), Joseph (42:18). This is really some emphasis. Fear and lack of faith are often associated (Dt.20:8; Jud.7:3; Mt. 25:25; Mk.4:40; Lk.12:32; Rom.8:15; Heb.13:6; 1 Jn.4:18; 2 Tim.1:7; Rev.21:8). Again, this list is impressive. Yet despite their fear, their lack of total certainty *at times* that God would keep His promises, the patriarchs are held up as examples of faith. If their fear had not been recorded, would the record of their faith mean much to us? Unlikely. They had so much which militated against a life of faith: by way of hereditary characteristic, surroundings, past experience of life etc. Both Isaac and Jacob feared they would die well before they did (47:9; 27:2); they feared death in that their future was ever on their mind. Yet evidently their fear was mixed with faith.

15:2 In my opinion, Abraham's comment "this Eliezer of Damascus..." (15:2) is another indicator of weakness in this undoubtedly great man. Eliezer is presented as a man of faith, of extreme loyalty to Abraham, with a wonderful humility in seeking the good of Isaac, the man who displaced him as heir of so much. His comment that God "led me- even me- straight to the house" further indicates a commendable humility. Indeed, the way Eliezer refuses the greetings of polite custom in order to get on with God's work (Gen. 24:33) appears to be used by the Lord as a model for His preachers (Lk. 10:4). A window into Eliezer's faithfulness is provided by considering how Laban calls him "O blessed of the Lord", but Eliezer replies that in fact "the Lord has greatly blessed *my master*" (Gen. 24:31,35). His focus was not at all upon himself but rather upon Abraham his master. Yet Abraham appears to almost despise Eliezer, his bitterness at not having a seed by Sarah got the better of him at that moment- so it seems to me. There seems a designed contrast between Eliezer and Jacob. Eliezer with utter integrity says that God has given him "success" (Gen. 24:12) in seeking a wife for Isaac; whereas Jacob uses the same word in lying to his blind father about why he had so quickly brought venison: "Because God granted me success" (Gen. 27:20).

So Abraham was hardly at his spiritual best when God gave him the promises of Genesis 15. The first use of a word in the Bible is often significant- and the first time we meet the Hebrew word *nathan*, to give, is in Gen. 1:17, where we learn that God 'gave' the stars to humanity on earth. It's as if God is now testing whether Abraham will make the connection or not- for He takes Abraham out to see the stars, shining up there in the sky as proof that God really can give stars, has already done so and continues to do so... and challenges Abraham as to whether or not he can believe that truly, his seed *will* be given to him likewise, as many as those stars (Gen. 15:5). And Abraham made it through the hoop. His awareness of the word of Gen. 1:17, that God really had given us the stars, his faith in the word, worked within him to bring forth the yet greater leap of faith- that really, so would his seed be. And God was thrilled. That man, standing there in the Middle Eastern night and beholding the stars, touched the heart of God by his internal attitudes... the sense within his heart that yes, OK, yes, somehow, yes, so will my seed be, somehow I *will* have my own child... And it was counted to him for righteousness. The same desperate struggle for faith was seen in the Lord in His final moments upon the cross- for He there reflected, according to Ps. 22:30, that a seed would indeed serve God, and it shall be accounted [s.w. "numbered" as in 'a seed which cannot be numbered'] for a generation. The childless Lord Jesus, with all against Him, facing His death with His lifework apparently a failure, His spiritual children [the disciples] having fled... was in the position of Abraham. And Abraham's faith surely inspired Him. And so it will each of us, when it seems that really life has failed, our efforts have got nowhere, family has broken up, children hate us, our best aspirations just never worked out... in those moments, in whatever form they come, we are to be inspired by Abraham. And we too can go out and view the stars which God has given, and keeps on giving, and believe again that ultimately He will give us the land, and in some form our seed will eternally endure.

The Lord "brought (Abraham) forth abroad and said, Look now toward Heaven, and tell the stars. . . (after a silent pause) So shall thy seed be. . . I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land" (Gen. 15:5-7). It must have been an Angel that led Abraham out of his tent to a suitable spot and made those promises.

According to Jewish midrash, Abram and his father Terah were leading diviners of the stars in Ur. 'Terah' can mean 'brother of the moon', and Ur and Haran were noted centres of moon worship. In

this case, the invitation to Abram to count the stars (15:5) and discern there his future seed was a calling to reject his entire former world-view, to admit his helplessness in counting the stars, to throw himself upon God's grace rather than the strength of his own former education, wisdom, and inherited ability to discern the stars.

It was radical for Abraham to be told that God would impute righteousness to him (15:6). For in those times, righteousness was a concept associated with a person remaining within their existing communal relationships. Von Rad quotes contemporary documentation to this effect: "A man is called righteous who conducts himself properly with reference to an existing communal relationship... just [justified] is the man who stands with his community". The whole message to Abraham of justification by faith and imputed righteousness must be seen against this backdrop. The same radical call to break away from our surrounding society and its worldviews and concepts of righteousness is required by all who have received the same promises made to Abraham.

When we read that Abraham "put his trust" in God (Gen. 15:6) we are to understand that he 'said amen' to God's promises. "Amen" comes from the same Hebrew root as *he'min*, to believe, or, more strictly, "to affirm, recognize as valid". He got to a specific point where he said "Amen" to God's word; and I wonder whether he said "Amen" out loud, as the crowning pinnacle of the belief in God which was going on within him. For this reason I suggest we say "Amen" at the end of a prayer, out loud. Yet this peak of faith in Abraham is found between evidence of his weakness of faith. We've seen this in the early verses of Gen. 15. And now, having risen up to this peak of faith, we find him doubting again: "How shall I know that I shall inherit [the land]?" (Gen. 15:8). And again, this makes Abraham yet the more real to us, who likewise find it so hard to maintain peaks of faith. God condescends to Abraham by cutting a covenant with him. It's perhaps significant that Abraham laid out the required animals, and drove away the birds that kept trying to feed on the carcasses- but then, Abraham falls asleep, and can't do this any more. And the birds are warded off instead by the burning torch- the same Hebrew words are used about the cherubim (Ez. 1:13; Ex. 20:18), and the idea of a burning torch is used to describe the Lord Jesus on the cross (Jn. 3:14-19 Gk.). It's as if again Abraham had to be taught that all these promises and the covenant ensuring them were all of grace and not his own strength. For he would lay down in the sleep of death, the horror of great darkness, and it will be the grace and glory of God which fulfils the covenant and preserves Abraham's seed from the birds of prey- and not Abraham's own efforts.

Abraham had been promised a son in Genesis 15; and yet there was no specific mention that this would be by Sarah. God had promised that "one born of your own bowels" would be his son (Gen. 15:7). Yet according to Rom. 4:19, Abraham at that time did not consider the "deadness of Sarah's womb" (Rom. 4:19) to be a barrier. That indicates to me that he considered Sarah as his "own bowels". Note how in Semitic thought, Paul used the same idea when he asked Philemon to receive Onesiphorus as "mine own bowels" (Philemon 12). Another person could be considered "mine own bowels" if they were that close. When God promised Abraham that "of [his] own bowels" he would have a son, Abraham didn't selfishly think that this just meant that *he* would have a child. He considered his wife Sarah as his "own bowels", and so he assumed this meant that she would bear the child. In this we see a commendable unity of Abraham and Sarah; he thought of her as he thought of himself. In an age of polygamy and concubines, this was unusually wonderful. He could so

easily have just gone off and slept with a woman to test out God's promise and have a child. And yet, as often in Abraham's life, he didn't maintain that level of spirituality. For he gave in to Sarah's badgering him to sleep with her slave girl Hagar, and the whole incident has been recorded with allusion to Adam wrongly hearkening to his wife. It has been pointed out that in case of a wife being infertile, the man usually took another wife and didn't just sleep with his slave girl. The 300 or so Nuzi tablets record history, legal codes and case history of situations contemporary with Abraham; and the comment has been made that deciding to sleep with your wife's slave girl was almost unheard of. So it seems to me that Abraham again gave in, in a moment of weakness; but didn't take another wife, because he really clung on to his faith that he would have a child by Sarah. The whole incident with Abraham and Hagar seems to me to reflect weakness in both Abraham and Sarah. Neither of them ever refer to her by her name, but rather by her title, "handmaid", as if she were just an object. Yet God and the inspired narrator refer to her by her name, Hagar, as if recognizing the value of her person in a way that Abraham and Sarah didn't. It seems to me that Israel's later experience re-lived that of Hagar- flight into the wilderness of Sinai, miraculously provided with water, found and preserved by an Angel. God heard the cry of Israel's affliction at the hands of the Egyptians, just as He heard the cry of the mother and child whom Sarah had afflicted. This deliberate coincidence was perhaps to make Israel realize on a national scale how wrongly their forefather had treated Hagar- and it has some relevance to modern Israel's treatment of the Arabs. For Israel suffer and will yet suffer what they have put Hagar's descendants through.

15:10 pieces. The idea of the dead animals in the ceremony of Gen. 15 was to teach that 'So may I be dismembered and die if I fail to keep my promise'. Jer. 34:18 speaks of how Israelites must die, because they passed between the pieces of the dead animal sacrifices in making a covenant. But here in Gen. 15, it is none less than the God who cannot die who is offering to do this, subjecting Himself to this potential curse! And He showed Himself for real in the death of His Son. That was His way of confirming the utter certainty of the promises to Abraham which are the basis of the new covenant which He has cut with us (Rom. 15:8; Gal. 3:17). The "blood of the covenant" doesn't mean that the blood of Jesus *is* or was the covenant; the covenant is a set of promises to us, namely the promises to Abraham and his seed. The blood of Jesus is the token of that covenant, the sign that this is all so utterly and totally true for each one of us. The Lord died, in the way that He did, to get through to us how true this all is- that God Almighty cut a sober, unilateral covenant with us personally, to give us the Kingdom. It's as challenging for us to believe as it was for Abraham and his earlier seed: "This divine-human bond gave to Israel its most distinctive religious belief, and provided the basis of its unique social interest and concern. Outside the Old Testament we have no clear evidence of a treaty between a god and his people" (4). What the theologian calls a unique basis for "social interest and concern" we can re-phrase more bluntly: We simply can't be passive to such grace, we have no option but to reach out with grace to others in care and concern- and we have a unique motivation in doing this, which this unbelieving world can never equal. Yet if unbelievers can show the huge care and self-sacrifice which they do- we ought to be doing *far* more, seeing we have an infinitely stronger motivation.

The way God confirmed the covenant in Genesis 15:17 was another example of this grace. The covenant God made with Abraham was similar in style to covenants made between men at that time; and yet there was a glaring difference. Abraham was not required to do anything or take upon himself any obligations- only God passed between the pieces, not Abraham. Circumcision [cp. baptism] was to remember that this covenant of grace had been made. It isn't part of the covenant

[thus we are under this same new, Abrahamic covenant, but don't require circumcision]. The promises to Abraham are pure, pure grace. Yahweh alone passed between the pieces of the animals, represented by the flaming torch- presumably in the form of an Angel as a pillar of fire. There's no record of Abraham being asked to pass through them as was usual custom. The promise of God was therefore unilateral- pure grace. And yet by its very nature, such unilateral grace from God cannot be received passively. Although there was no specified response from Abraham, clearly enough he simply *had* to respond to such grace. It's been pointed out that Abraham was blessed by God, and yet the Hebrew form of the promise implies that he was commanded to therefore go forth and "be a blessing"- and his intercession for Lot and Sodom, his rescue of Lot in Gen. 14, were providentially arranged for him to practice that. A similar construction (an imperative verb string *hyh* + a noun) occurs in Gen. 17:1, "be blameless / perfect".

A recurrent weakness of the patriarchs is their attempts to as it were force God's hand when it came to which of their children should continue with the covenant blessings. As Abraham used his handmaid to try to produce the promised seed (Gen. 16:2), so Jacob, Rachel and Leah did. God had told Abraham clearly that the covenant would continue through Isaac rather than Ishmael, and that circumcision was the sign of that covenant; and yet Abraham remonstrates with God: "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" (Gen. 17:18), employing the idea of 'living before God' in a covenantal sense. When God again repeats His purpose with Isaac, Abraham goes and circumcises Ishmael, as if he was to still participate in the covenant God wished to continue through Isaac (Gen. 17:23). The fact that Abraham's circumcision of Ishmael is specifically recorded highlights his insistence on trying to make God's promises fulfil as *he* would like them to. Isaac did the same, insistent upon giving the covenant blessing to Esau rather than Jacob; Jacob likewise did something similar when he tried to reverse the blessing upon Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:18).

"Through faith even Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed" (Heb. 11:11 RV). "Even Sarah herself" is clearly making a point, holding up a flashing light over this particular example. There is every reason to think, from the Genesis record, that Sarah not only lacked faith in the promises, but also had a bitter, unspiritual mind. The account alludes back to Eve's beguiling of Adam when it records how "Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai" (Gen. 16:2) in acquiescing to her plan to give her a seed through Abram marrying his slave girl. The whole thing between Sarah and Abraham seems wrong on at least two counts: firstly it reflects a lack of faith in the promise; and secondly it flouts God's ideal standards of marriage. Sarai seems to have recognized the error when she bitterly comments to Abram: "My wrong be upon thee" (16:5). Her comment that "the Lord hath restrained me from bearing" (16:2) would suggest that she thought she hadn't been chosen to bear the promised seed. Yet because of her faith, says Heb. 11:11, she received strength to bear that seed. Hagar was so persecuted by Sarah that she "fled from her face" (16:6). God's attitude to Hagar seems to reflect a certain amount of sympathy for the harsh way in which Sarah had dealt with her. These years of bitterness and lack of faith came to the surface when Sarah overheard the Angel assuring Abraham that Sarah really would have a son. She mockingly laughed at the promise, deep within herself (18:15). Yet according to Heb. 11:11, she rallied her faith and believed. But as soon as Isaac was born, her bitterness flew to the surface again when she was Ishmael mocking. In what can only be described as unrestrained anger, she ordered Hagar and Ishmael out into the scorching desert, to a certain death (humanly speaking). Again, one can sense the sympathy of God for Hagar at this time. And so wedged in between incidents which belied a deep bitterness, lack of faith and

pride (after Isaac was born), the Spirit in Heb. 11:11 discerns her faith; on account of which, Heb. 11:12 implies ("therefore"), the whole purpose of God in Christ could go forward.

The theme of Abraham's weakness continues over into chapter 16- where Sarah asks Abraham to sleep with her servant girl in order to have a child. Why did Sarah ask Abraham to do this, at this stage in their lives? Why not earlier? Surely the promise of a seed had restimulated her pain regarding her barren state. Yet Abraham had previously worked through with the Lord the possibility of Eliezer, one born in his household, being the promised seed. And God had clarified that no, Abraham's own child would be the heir. It's as if Sarah could believe that Abraham's impotence could be cured, but not her barrenness. "And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai" (Gen. 16:2) is of course framed in the language of Adam hearkening to Eve's voice. I can only take this incident- and the less than honourable treatment of Hagar afterwards- to be another trough in Abraham's faith graph. It's been pointed out that all historical and cultural evidence from the time points to Abraham's action as being most unusual. In the case of a barren wife, the man chose himself a second wife. It's almost unheard of in contemporary records for a man to have his wife chose him a woman to have a child by- let alone for it to be one of her slavegirls. This historical background provides a window into Abraham's faithful commitment to Sarah- for it's significant that he's not recorded as taking another wife. Instead, his fine faith and character slips up in a moment of weakness by giving in to Sarah for a moment.

Gen. 16:7 "And the angel of the LORD (called 'God' in v. 13) found her (Hagar) by a fountain", as if He was not sure where she was and had to search; this 'language of limitation' may refer to the Angels rather than God personally.

The Hebrew word 'shaddai' (Almighty) is often linked in the Pentateuch with the idea of fruitfulness and provision of good things (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25). The Hebrew root 'shad' is the word for 'breast'. The references in Genesis speak of the Almighty making the promises; elsewhere we see that the promises were made by the Angels. Thus the Angels were perceived as providers of all good things, which would explain why the book of Job so frequently uses 'shaddai' as the word for God; and why one of the purposes of the book is to correct the wrong idea of shaddai as a giver of only good things, perhaps through the desire to contrast the true God with other contemporary fertility gods who were thought to provide all good things.

The command "Be perfect" can be translated "Be perfected" (Gen. 17:1). There's some support for this when we consider the inspired commentary upon the promises to Abraham in Heb. 11:39,40: "[He] received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be perfected". "The promise" and being "perfected" are thus paralleled. In this we may have in Gen. 17:1 another promise to Abraham- to 'be perfected', and this could only come true through God's perfect righteousness being imputed to him. The New Testament informs us quite simply that Abraham believed the promise of being in the Kingdom, and he was therefore 'justified', or counted righteous (Gen. 15:6). But God led him in appreciating what those promises really implied. If he was going to live eternally in God's Kingdom, then he would only be there because God counted him righteous. And so it seems to me that God developed Abraham's mind further by promising him in Gen. 17:1 that he would indeed "be perfected", which could only have come about through God imputing righteousness to him. It could be that when Abraham "believed" the promise of the Kingdom in Gen. 15:6, he didn't realize that in Heaven, God was so thrilled with his faith that

He counted Abraham as righteous, in order to fulfill the promise of giving him eternal life. And then in Gen. 17:1, God communicated this to Abraham in the promise that He would 'perfect' him. And God patiently works with us likewise, as we struggle to really, really believe that we will live eternally in His Kingdom; and as we progressively realize throughout life that this can only be possible by the Lord's perfection being counted to us.

God appeared again to Abraham, and made a conditional promise: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect... and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (Gen. 17:1,2). The Hebrew certainly reads as if Abraham had to be "perfect" and walk before God, and then, God would make a covenant with him and multiply him. Abraham falls to his face; and then God announces that actually, He will make the covenant anyway, and the promises which are part of that covenant, Abraham should consider as having been fulfilled already, they were so certain of fulfillment. Consider the wording: "Behold, my covenant *is* [present tense- right now, i.e. Abraham didn't have to prove himself "perfect"] with thee, and you shall be [future] a father of many nations... your name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations *have I made thee*" (Gen. 17:4,5). The Abrahamic promises, which we too have received, are a reflection of unconditional love and grace on God's part. At the end of all the Divine announcements, we read that Abraham again falls on his face and laughs for joy (Gen. 17:17). Perhaps by Angelic invitation (as with Daniel), Abraham had stood up from the floor to hear God's promises from the mouth of the Angel- and now he collapses again. The sheer *wonder* of God's grace in these promises is simply *so* great. What is conditional upon our walking 'perfectly' has been given to us anyway, by grace- for righteousness has been imputed to us as it was to Abraham. As a side comment, it seems to me that surprised laughter occurs when we encounter a difference between the expected, and an unexpected reality that takes us pleasantly by surprise. That observation would indicate Abraham's seeing by faith the reality of what God had promised; and yet it would also suggest that prior to this, Abraham was not really expecting God to completely fulfil the implication of the promises.

17:3 The Hebrew translated "fell on his face" is exactly the same as that translated "his countenance fell" in Gen. 4:5,6 (see too Job 29:24). Another reading of this incident could therefore be that Abraham's face fell on hearing that the covenant would be conditional upon his walking perfectly- but then God made the covenant anyway with him, and therefore in verse 17 he falls on his face and laughs with joy. This, perhaps, is the more likely, realistic reading; and it also avoids the problem of Abraham falling to his face twice with no record of him standing up again.

Abram means 'high / exalted father', and can mean "he is of exalted i.e. good ancestry". Yet Abram's name was changed (17:5). He was to be the father of a new family, as 'Abraham' implied, and to sever all connection with his human ancestry and family. The way 'Abram' was changed to 'AbraHAM' and 'Sarah' to 'SarAH' shows how God wishes to mix syllables of His Name with that of men. Jacob was changed to Isra-el, mixing God's name with that of his father. This is indeed mutuality between God and man- and it demands so much.

17:5-11. Blessings of many children, a specific seed / son who would bring glory and blessing, and a name change... are all frequently found in records of wedding blessings. In making those promises to Abraham, in mixing the letters of His Name with that of Abram... Yahweh was entering a marriage covenant with Abraham the impotent, the childless, the humanly hopeless. And He does the very same for each of us who are baptized into that same Name and become recipients of the very same

promises. What was weird and so counter-instinctive in this wedding- was the token of the marriage covenant. Abraham was to mutilate his male generative organ as a sign that God would generate him a great seed and family. Academics are divided as to whether such circumcision was in fact a common practice at the time [in which case it would fail to be a very unique token], or whether this was actually a radical and unusually intimate and shocking requirement from God. The unique nature of God's covenant with Abraham, that he *alone* had God known of all families of the earth, suggests to me that the latter view is likely to be correct. And remember time and again, that these same promises, this same covenant, is made to us in Christ (Gal. 3:27-29). Our response to what God has promised us requires us to likewise respond in a counter-cultural and counter-instinctive way . To give up this world in order to gain it, to lose now in order to win ultimately and eternally.

The Abrahamic covenant is made personally with every member of the seed " in their generations" (Gen. 17:7). The records of the renewing of the covenant to Isaac and Jacob are but indicators that this is the experience of each one of the seed. This means that the covenant love of God and the promise of personal inheritance of the land is made personally, and confirmed by the shedding of Christ's blood, to each of us. God promised Abraham that through Christ, His seed, blessing would come on people from all nations, with the result that God would be the God of Abraham's multitudinous seed: " To be a God unto...thy seed...I will be their God" (Gen. 17:7,8). The seed is Christ, and the " God" is Yahweh. Let's not confuse them. Now in Revelation 21:3 this fundamental promise is alluded to; God Himself will be our God then; we will see Him and have a personal relationship with Him. This would mean that this idea of personally being with God is a fundamental part of the Gospel preached to Abraham

It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. Gen. 18:10 describes the Angel saying to Abraham "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son". On that first visit, the Angel must have enabled Sarah to conceive, and then He physically returned nine months later. See on Gen. 24:40; 28:12,13-15; Ex. 3:8; 9:14; Mt. 2:13; 2 Kings 13:23; 1 Chron. 14:15; Mt. 22:30; Dt. 4:7; Ps. 57:3; 78:49; 144:7; Lk. 4:11; Dan. 3:28; 9:21; 10:13; Acts 10:5; Rev. 9:1; 1 Sam. 2:21; Is. 31:4; 1 Cor. 11:10

Sarah murmured that it was impossible for her to have "pleasure" in childbearing (Gen. 18:12). She uses the word *ednah*, related to the word *Eden*. Yet in the events of Gen. 19, she sees how the land around Sodom that was once "like the garden of Eden" (Gen. 13:10) is made barren and sowed with salt so that nothing could grow there (Gen. 19:25; Dt. 29:23). She was being taught that God can give and take away fertility on a huge scale.

At present it is the Angel-cherubim's job to "keep the way of the tree of life". They have been given this charge, and yet they chose men to fulfil it who will keep the way pure- thus the Angels decided concerning Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children. . and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19). It will be our duty to take over as the way keepers from the Angels, although we should have had good practice in this life. Thus we will say to the mortal population "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Is. 30:21).

The lack of ultimate Angelic knowledge results in the Angels taking time to think things out and discuss their action with each other, which may result in an apparent delay to we humans. Thus in Gen. 18:17 "The LORD (an Angel) said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?". However, this same incident shows that there are varying degrees of knowledge amongst Angels or in the same Angel over time. The Angel who destroyed Sodom reasoned: "I know him (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him" (Gen. 18:19). Yet perhaps the same Angel, or the mighty Angel of Israel which made the promises to the patriarchs said to Abraham a few months later after his offering up of Isaac: "Now I know that thou fearest God" (Gen. 22:12), implying that he did not know whether Abraham's faith was genuine before that incident, and that the knowledge of Gen. 18:19 was merely that Abraham would 'teach his children the truth' and did not reflect any knowledge of Abraham's personal faith. In this case, Sodom might have been preserved by reason of Abraham's known willingness to teach others 'the truth' rather than because of any personal faith in God he may have had. Thus the lesson comes home that a man's zeal or success in preaching can be unrelated to his personal faith or spirituality. The elohim "found" Abraham's heart to be faithful (Neh. 9:8). This was by a process of research and drawing of conclusions. And our Angels are in the process of doing the same with us this very day.

God's way of using the Angels to punish Sodom gives insight into the relationship between them and God. God Himself knew exactly what He would do because of the wickedness He knew was in the city. The Angel who debated whether to reveal to Abraham His purpose with Sodom (Gen. 18:17) says "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great. . I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me". The Angels responsible for Sodom had brought the "cry" or news of Sodom's sins to the attention of this senior Angel, who then investigates it further to see whether or not their news was correct. "And if not, I will know"- the emphasis being on the "I"- i. e. 'whether their news was correct or incorrect, I will know because I am blessed with greater powers than they'. This senior Angel seems to manifest God to a very great degree, as Gen. 19:13 describes the other two "men" (Angels) saying to Lot "we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord (the third "man"- the senior Angel); and the Lord (senior Angel) hath sent us to destroy it". These two Angels sent to execute the judgements were under specific guidelines- v. 22 "I cannot do anything till thou be come thither". Thus these Angels were given power conditional on certain things happening. Perhaps this was part of the work of Palmoni, the "wonderful numberer" of Daniel, who is the Angel responsible for all timing; maybe He decreed that they could only have power once the condition of Lot leaving the city was fulfilled. Maybe this Angel co-ordinates all the huge number of timings which go to make up God's purpose? This would explain the passages which imply that a set time is allowed to some human beings to bring about repentance and response to God's offers. Thus Pharaoh was condemned because he "let the appointed time pass by" (Jer. 46:17).

See on Gen. 1:26

The command to preach to "all nations" would ring bells in Jewish minds with the promises to Abraham, concerning the blessing of forgiveness to come upon "all nations" through Messiah (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4). Therefore God's people are to preach the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ to "all nations". The offer of sharing in that blessing did not close at the end of the first century. Putting the "all nations" of the Abrahamic promises together with Christ's preaching commission leads to a simple conclusion: The Hope of Israel now applies to all nations; so go and tell this good news to all

nations. Perhaps this is why there appears to be an intended grammatical ambiguity in the 'promise' that Abraham and his seed would be a blessing for all nations. It's unclear, as we've commented elsewhere, whether "be a blessing" is purely a prophetic prediction or a command. The commentary upon the promises to David in Ps. 72:17 is similar: "May his name resound for ever... may men bless themselves by him, may all nations pronounce him blessed". It is for us to go forth and be a blessing, and to make His Name great to the ends of the earth.

A close study of the record of Sodom's destruction will reveal that the 'Lord' spoken of there was one of the Angels who arranged the judgements on Sodom. "The Lord said, Because the cry (NIV 'Outcry') of Sodom. . is great. . I will go down now" (Gen. 18:20,21). Perhaps this outcry of Sodom was from the Angels who were shocked at its sinfulness, whose concern prompted the senior Angel into 'coming down' in judgement.

The Angel of Gen. 18:21 seems to recognize His own limited perceptions: "I will therefore go down and see, if they completely correspond with the cry which comes to me, and if not, that I may know" (LXX). And we shall be made like the Angels (Lk. 20:35,36).

18:23. Circumstances were overruled by God to teach Abraham that he really would be a blessing to others, as He had promised. Twice he intercedes for blessing upon Sodom (Gen. 14:14; 18:23-33); just as e.g. we may be called to care for a sick person, in order to teach us about how we really are to be a blessing to others. Perhaps the most telling example of the limitation of God's potential by men is in Abraham's request that God would spare Sodom for the sake of fifty righteous men there. He then lowers the number to 40, and then finally to ten, assuming that surely Lot's family were righteous and would comprise ten righteous. If Abraham had left off praying at, say, forty...then this would have been the limit God set. If there were ten righteous there, the city wouldn't have been saved. But Abraham went on to set the limit at ten. But we wonder, what would have happened if he had gone further and asked God to save Sodom for the sake of one righteous man, i.e. Lot? My sense is that the Father would have agreed. But the city wasn't saved for the sake of the one man Lot, because Abraham limited God's desire to save by the smallness of his vision. This principle can possibly be extended even wider. David asks: " Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee" (Ps. 33:22). And whoever prayed Ps. 132:10 asked to be heard " for thy servant David's sake" - he or she believed that God would remember David and for *his* sake respond favourably [and how much more powerful is prayer uttered for the sake of the Son of God!].

The Angels who visited Lot in Sodom wanted initially to lodge in the street, but they were persuaded by Lot to change their plans (Gen. 19:3). And who is to say that to some extent this isn't possible today, too?

19:9 God's sight- see on Is. 6:7

Abraham's weak attitude to leaving Ur is reflected much later too, when he tells Abimelech that "the gods caused me to wander from my father's house" (Gen. 20:13). The Hebrew *ta'ah* ("wander") has the idea of wandering aimlessly (Gen. 21:14; 37:15) and even sinning (Is. 53:6). It wasn't a very nice term to use about God's providence. That seems to me to be a believer in a moment of weakness speaking about his faith in very worldly terms, as one pagan to another. He doesn't see his leaving of his father's house as obedience to Divine command and promise; but rather he portrays that response as his being somehow manipulated by the gods, picked up and taken out of the situation.

See on 11:31. Abraham's comment that God caused him to go astray from his father's house (Gen. 20:13) would likely have been understood by those who first heard it as a negative reference to God- for the word "gone astray" is used of a lost sheep (Jer. 50:6; Ez. 34:4,16; Ps. 119:176); and it was understood that "A bad shepherd causes a sheep to go astray from the flock because he is careless". Perhaps God recognized Abraham's failure by instructing His people to confess every year that "An Aramaean gone astray was my father" (Dt. 26:5). I take this to be a reference to Abraham and not Jacob; for it seems that the people of Aram migrated to Ur, and that Abraham having settled in Padan Aram, Abraham could also for that reason be called an Aramaean. So Israel were asked to remember that their forefather Abraham had gone astray both literally and spiritually; and thus Abraham's God was a God of grace, and was thereby their God too.

Sarah was "reproved" by King Abimelech for going along with Abraham's lie about her not being his wife (Gen. 20:16). And yet Kings were reprovved for her sake, and were not allowed to do anything harmful to her (Ps. 105:14)! And Abraham reprovves Abimelech later- for something Abimelech claimed he had not done (Gen. 21:25). The repeat of the word "reprove" is surely meant to indicate that here is an example of Abraham and Sarah being counted righteous because of their faith- when clearly they were not wholly righteous. Abraham, the man who had to be reprovved, was used by God to reprove the man who had reprovved him...it would have sounded very hypocritical to Abraham's neighbours. Yet the point was, that God saw him as being righteous. See on 26:11

In Gen. 20:17, Abraham's weakness leads Abimelech's wives to become barren; yet through the faith and prayer of an undoubtedly spiritually weak Abraham, their fertility is restored. Again, God was teaching Abraham through circumstances. It could also be reasoned from Gen. 20:6 that God weakened Abimelech's body so that he had no sexual desire for Sarah- and again, this was to teach Abraham the impotent old man that virility is a gift which God can give and take at ease. The wonderful thing is that all these lessons were taught to Abraham through the incident of lying about and betraying his wife, which shows the weakness of his faith in God's promises. The way God works with and through human weakness is awesome.

Sarah's screaming indignation can be well imagined. Consider which words were probably stressed most by her: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir (just hear her voice!) with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). This is in harmony with her previous bitterness and aggression to Hagar and Abraham. Her attitude in implying that Ishmael was not the seed is gently rebuked by God in his subsequent words to Abraham concerning Ishmael: "He is thy seed" (Gen. 21:13). And yet Sarah's words are quoted in Gal. 4:30 as inspired Scripture! Here we see the wonder of the God with whom we deal, in the way in which He patiently bore with Sarah and Abraham. He saw through her anger, her jealousy, the pent up bitterness of a lifetime, and he saw her faith. And he worked through that screaming, angry woman to be His prophet. According to Gal. 4:30, God Himself spoke through her in those words, outlining a principle which has been true over the generations; that the son of the slave must be cast out, and that there must always be conflict between him and the true seed. Sarah in her time of child-birth is likened to us all as we enter the Kingdom, full of joy (Is. 54:1-4); and yet at that time she was eaten up with pride and joy that she could now triumph over her rival. And yet Sarah at that time is seen from a righteous

perspective, in that she is a type of us as we enter the Kingdom. God's mercy to Sarah and Abraham is repeated to us daily.

The fact we read a phrase like "the Angel of elohim" in Gen. 21:17 confirms that individual angels can be messengers of other Angel-elohim, and that there is a degree of hierarchy in the Heavenly organization.

21:19- see on Ps. 119:18

One senses a growing humility within Abraham. Despite being a great man, called a "mighty prince" by local people, with a large household and private army, he personally runs to entertain the strangers who later turned out to be Angels. He so believed in the promised land being ultimately his that he could offer to his younger relative Lot the choice of the best land to live in- when in their culture, the leader of the community, the elder, naturally had the best of everything. Progressive faith in the promises led Abraham to greater integrity and openness. In Gen. 21:25-32 we see Abraham as a secretive, furtive character, secretly digging wells in Abimelech's territory without telling him. By Gen. 23:1-20 we see Abraham buying land from the Hittites in a very public manner, sealed by witnesses- the record emphasizes the integrity and openness of the whole transaction. And this purchase of land is quoted in the New Testament as an example of Abraham's faith that he would inherit the land ultimately. The same effects will be seen in the lives of all those who truly believe in those same promises. Seeing it was traditional to bury people with their ancestors, the purchase of a family "burying place" was also a statement that Abraham had finally separated from his father's house back in Ur and Haran. From now on, he saw Canaan as truly his land. Abraham had struggled with this commanded separation from his father's house.

21:27. One can't help but notice that God stressed to the later children of Abraham that since they had a covenant with Him, they were not to make covenants with the people who lived around them in the land- time and again God references His covenant with His people, and in that context tells them not to make covenants with the peoples of the land (Ex. 34:10-12,15,27; Dt. 7:29; Jud. 2:1,2,20). Yet Abraham made covenants with those very people (Gen. 14:13; 21:27,32)- perhaps indicating his lack of appreciation of his covenant relationship with Yahweh?.

22. The offering of Isaac was without doubt an act of faith by Abraham. His trust in the invisible God, His reflection upon a series of promises which amount to no more than about 200 words in Hebrew, was balanced against his natural hope for his family, human affection, common sense, love of his beloved son, lifelong ambition... and he was willing to ditch all those things for his faith in God's promises. You can speak 200 words in a minute. The total sum of God's recorded communication with Abraham was only a minute's worth of speaking. Abraham had so much faith in so few words; and perhaps the number of words was so few so that Abraham would memorize and continually reflect upon them. Yet the total number of words God or an Angel spoke to Abraham about anything was pretty small- the total [including the words of the promises] comes to only 583 Hebrew words- which can be spoken in less than three minutes [Gen.12:1-3 = 28 words; 12:7 = 4 words; 13:14-16 = 44 words; Gen. 15 = 117 words; Gen. 17 = 195 words; Gen. 18 = 87 words; Gen. 21 = 26 words; Gen. 22 = 82 words]. And remember that all these words, these snatches of brief conversation, were spoken to Abraham over a period of 100 years or so. His faith in God's word, His meditation upon it and following its implications, really does make him a spiritual "father of us all".

'Arise and go' (22:3). There are examples of Abraham being progressively set up by God so that his spiritual growth would be an upward spiral. Initially, he was told to walk / go to a land which God would shew him (Gen. 12:1); when he got there, he was told to "arise", and "walk" through that land of Canaan (Gen. 13:17). And Abraham, albeit in a faltering kind of way, did just this. But this was to prepare him for the test of Gen. 22:3 in the command to offer Isaac. His obedience this time isn't at all faltering. He "arises" and 'goes' [s.w. "walk"] "unto the place of which God had told him" to offer Isaac (Gen. 22:3). This is exactly what he had been called to do right back in Ur- to arise and walk / go to a land / place which God would show him (Gen. 12:1). And so our obedience in one challenge of God leads us to obedience in others. I've elsewhere pointed out how circumstances tend to repeat both within and between the lives of God's faithful. One experience is designed to lead us to another. Nothing- absolutely nothing- in our lives is senseless chance. All- and this takes some believing- is part of a higher plan for our spiritual good, in our latter end.

Because the Angels are of limited knowledge, it seems that they bring some trials upon us in order to find out more about us- e. g. the Angel said to Abraham when He saw he was prepared to offer Isaac "Now I know that thou fearest God" (Gen. 22:12). This is language of limitation- God Himself knows all things, but the Angel wanted to test Abraham. Indeed, the apocryphal *Book Of Jubilees* claims in so many words that it was an Angel called Mastema who was responsible for the idea of testing Abraham in order to determine his level of obedience.

22:14 - see on Job 42:1

Abraham walked around in his promised land with the attitude of a stranger just passing through, although he was probably the most powerful man in it. The record of his purchase of Machpelah seems to exemplify this. Not only is the presence of the children of Heth highlighted (23:3,5,7,10,11,12,13,16,18), but the record of Abraham's words demonstrates his appreciation that he was only passing through: " *Intreat* for me to Ephron...that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which *he hath*... for full money he shall *give it* me for a possession...*amongst you* ...and Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land...and the field...in all the borders round about (was) made sure" (23:9-17 AVmg.). The mention of the borders really rubs it in. Not only was the land promised to Abraham, but he was politically more powerful than the children of Heth; he could have annexed it for himself at ease. The children of Heth were willing to give it to him for free anyway (23:11). Yet the realization by Abraham of his present position, the humility created by faith, shines through the narrative. Zacchaeus is called a son of Abraham in that he too repented of his self-centred materialism (Lk. 19:9).

It must be significant that Abraham told Eliezer to take Isaac a wife from " my country...my kindred...thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell" (Gen.24:3,4). It follows that there were none of Abraham's country or kindred, which he had been commanded to leave, living anywhere near him. He had truly and fully obeyed the command to separate from them! As with many Christian youngsters today, the avoidance of marrying those in the surrounding world just seemed too much to ask. But Abraham knew that a way would be made: " The Lord God of Heaven, which *took* me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred...he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt *take* a wife unto my son" (Gen.24:7). As God had *taken* Abram from Ur and Haran and Lot, so God would *take* a woman from there, suitable for Isaac.

24:7- see on 1 Pet. 1:10

24:27- see on 25:23

There was a definite trait of energy and industrious activity amongst the Abraham family, indicated by the record of Rebekah running to respond to the call of Eleazer to marry Isaac (Gen.24:18,20,28,58). Laban too was spritely (Gen.24:29). And Abraham as an old boy *ran* to meet the Angels, he *hastened* into the tent, and personally *ran* unto the herd rather than wave his wand at the servants (or the wife) to do it (Gen.18:2,6,7). The way in which it is stressed that he got up early in the morning gives the same impression (19:27; 20:8; 21:14; 22:3; the same is said of Jacob, 28:18 and Laban, 31:55). The mixture of zeal and business acumen is reflected in the way both Abraham and Lot greeted the Angels in a similar, outgoing, gentlemanly manner (19:1-3 cp. 18:1-6). Note how Rebekah immediately says "I will go" (Heb. *elek*)- just as Abraham had been called to "go" from Ur (*lek*, Gen. 12:1); "and he went" (*wayyelek*, Gen. 12:4). This would seem to suggest an undesigned similarity of character between the family members.

Because our Angel has been so zealous in acting for us, we too should be zealous in return- thus Abraham's servant, knowing that God had sent an Angel before him to prepare the way for his mission of finding a wife for Isaac (Gen. 24:40), was eager to be as zealous as possible to do his part in the work- "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord (the Angel) hath prospered my way" (v. 56). There are many other examples of this. Because the Angel is with us, we must joyfully and enthusiastically do our part. See on Hag. 2:4.

Gen. 24:40 "The LORD before whom I walk shall send His Angel with thee and prosper thy way" (Abraham to Eliezer as he journeyed to find a wife for Isaac). Here clearly the Angel was physically sent. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10.

Abraham's servant said that he walked 'before the Lord' (Gen. 24:40), reflecting how he too saw that he was following an Angel. He therefore urges Bethuel: "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way" (Gen. 24:56). He felt he was on a roll, being led onwards by the Angel- and he didn't want anything to interrupt that. The sensitive believer will perceive similar situations, time and again, as we seek to follow the leading of the Angel / cherubim before whom we walk. If we walk in step with the Angel, success is assured.

It would seem that Abraham at the time of the promises, Abraham had other children by Keturah, another "concubine" , as she is described in 1 Chron. 1:32. This term is only really applicable to other women taken during the lifetime of the wife or wives. Although the children of Keturah and Abraham are only recorded in Gen. 25:1-4, it seems to me that this isn't chronological; it seems to me that this a notice inserted at this point as a genealogical note, rather than implying that Abraham only took Keturah after the marriage of Isaac in Gen. 24. Remember that at the time of the promise in Gen. 15, Abraham was impotent- hence his bitterness at not having any child, and Rom. 4:19 describes his having faith that he would overcome this problem. Having recovered his virility, it could be that he eagerly had children by Keturah to as it were prove himself. Yet one wonders therefore how long he maintained the intensity of his faith that specifically by Sarah he would have a child. Yet

that faith of Abraham at the time of the promise in Gen. 15 was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, is held up as our example and glorified throughout the New Testament- when it would seem that in fact Abraham didn't always maintain the intensity of the faith he had at that time. And God Himself had to reassure him: "Know of a *surety*" (Gen. 15:13), as if God recognized the element of doubt within the faith of Abraham- although God elsewhere holds up that faith to us as such a wonderful example.

God had promised his mother Rebekah that the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob); and yet her concern to trick her husband into blessing Jacob rather than Esau was studied rejection of that promise (25:23). And Jacob followed her in her faithlessness- in this area. He perceived the promises of God through her eyes, rather than his own. Likewise Isaac saw the promises as "mercy and truth" (24:27); and so did Jacob (32:10).

By grace, righteousness has to be imputed to us. The spiritual blindnesses and deficiencies of our brethren can be so agonizing to behold; and yet we too have ours, as Jacob had his, and the fact we have them does not mean that we (or they, or Jacob) will not be saved in the end. Perhaps you won't agree with *all* the following; but the general picture is clear: he didn't quite make it to the spiritually perfect / mature status with which he is credited right at the beginning (25:27 Heb.). Job is an identical case; he is labelled "perfect" at the beginning, but at the end of his spiritual growth, he didn't quite get to perfection. The weakness of Jacob meant likewise. Thus the record is written in such a way as to make Jacob out to be the righteous one; he is described as "perfect" at a time when he had not even accepted Yahweh as his God. Thus what he eventually was is said of him at the beginning, but with no hint that this is the case; the impression is given that he was always "perfect" from the start (25:27). Jacob is there described as living in tents with his righteous father and grandfather; whereas there is ample evidence that he was quite used to the tough outdoor life, and was an accomplished shepherd. Heb. 11:9 implies that he had faith in the promises and was indeed an heir of them at this time; even though he did not see them as personally applying to him then (28:20), and was more involved in idolatry than he should have been.

Jacob was 77 when he fled from Esau. As far as we know, he had lived all that time "dwelling in tents" (25:27); and Heb. 11:9 adds the information that at this time, faithful Abraham lived together with Isaac and Jacob in the same tents. Jacob grew up with Abraham and Isaac. He would have known the promises backwards. He lived, as far as we know, a single life, staying at home with his mother, who evidently doted on him, openly preferring him to Esau. Yet at this time, Jacob did not accept the Abrahamic promises as really relevant to him, nor did he worship Yahweh as his God (28:20). Familiarity bred contempt: "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel...thy first father (i.e. natural Jacob) hath sinned" (in this way) (Is. 43:22,27).

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (Heb. 11:20). Yet the record of this in Gen. 27 doesn't paint Isaac in a very positive light. "Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Gen. 25:28). The AVmg. seems to bring out Isaac's superficiality: "Isaac loved Esau, because venison was in his mouth". This seems to connect with the way Esau threw away his birthright for the sake of food in his mouth. Esau was evidently of the flesh, whilst Jacob had at least some potential spirituality. Yet Isaac preferred Esau. He chose to live in Gerar (Gen. 26:6), right on the border of Egypt- as close as he could get to the world, without crossing the line. And he thought nothing of denying his marriage to Rebekah, just to save his own skin (Gen.

26:7). So it seems Isaac had some marriage problems; the record speaks of " Esau his son" and " Jacob (Rebekah's) son" (Gen. 27:5,6). The way Jacob gave Isaac wine " and he drank" just before giving the blessings is another hint at some unspirituality (Gen. 27:25). Isaac seems not to have accepted the Divine prophecy concerning his sons: " the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23), seeing that it was his intention to give Esau the blessings of the firstborn, and thinking that he was speaking to Esau, he gave him the blessing of his younger brothers (i.e. Jacob) serving him (Gen. 27:29 cp. 15). *And yet*, and this is my point, Isaac's blessing of the two boys is described as an act of faith; even though it was only one of his passing moments of faith and was done with an element of disbelief in God's word of prophecy concerning the elder serving the younger, and perhaps under the influence of alcohol. Yet according to Heb. 11:20, this blessing was done with faith; *at that very point in time*, Isaac had faith. So God's piercing eye saw through the haze of alcohol, through Isaac's liking for the good life, through Isaac's unspiritual liking for Esau, through his marriage problem, through his lack of faith that the elder must serve the younger, and discerned that there was some faith in that man Isaac; and then holds this up as a stimulant for our faith, centuries later! Not only should we be exhorted to see the good side in our present brethren; but we can take comfort that this God is our God.

Jacob's perception of the promises as only for his personal, physical benefit was clearly evidenced in the way in which he was so bent on obtaining the birthright from Esau (25:31). This was no sign of spirituality, but rather of his obsession with material acquisition. We can be sure he arranged to be boiling that broth just at the right moment. It was hardly an off-the-cuff decision to ask Esau for the birthright. He not only disbelieved the promise that the elder would serve the younger, but he misunderstood it, thinking that God's promises were dependent upon human works and wit to be fulfilled. He spoke of how he would bring upon himself the blessing God had promised him (27:12). Later, he reveals the same attitude when he describes his children as the fulfillment of the promises of present fruitfulness (32:10), but also the children he had obtained by his own service (30:26); he thought that his own effort and labour had fulfilled God's promises. He reasoned that Laban had been rebuked by God because God had seen how hard he had worked (31:42). He explicitly says that if God further increases his flocks, it would be a sign that he was righteous (30:33). Like Job, he had to learn that God's blessings are not primarily *physical*, and that we do not receive them in proportion to our present righteousness. And yet during this learning process, God patiently went along with him to some extent.

26:6 Gerar- see on 25:28

26:7- see on 25:28

The Abimelech kings appear far more gracious and honourable than the Abraham family who wandered in and out of their territory; the way Abimelech threatens his own people with death if they touch Isaac or his wife, after they had been deceitful to him, is an example (Gen. 26:11). Yet it was not the nice people of the world, but this wandering, spiritually struggling family whom God loved and worked with. See on 20:16

The Abraham family's considerable wealth is a theme in the records. " Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great" (26:12,13) is quite some emphasis of the same point. Eleazer commented on Abraham's material wealth: " The Lord hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great (note the repetition)" ; he then goes on to enumerate a long list of possessions: flocks, herds, silver, gold, menservants, maidservants, camels, asses. Truly " The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things" (24:1). This suggests that the patriarchs' material prosperity was a primary fulfillment of the Abrahamic blessing in their lifetime. Peter interprets the blessing as the forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:25,26). The stress on their material blessings therefore points forward to our spiritual riches of blessing in Christ. Even earlier in Abraham's life, " Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold" (13:1). Other references to Abraham's wealth occur in 13:6; 14:23. Jacob too was blessed with material wealth (31:16; 33:11 AVmg.). His parting with Esau because they were both so wealthy (36:7) echoes the division between Abraham and Lot and Abraham and Abimelech for the same reason (13:6). The similarities between these incidents serves to emphasize the wealth of the family. The prosperity of Lot in Sodom is also highlighted (14:12 Heb.). Each of them seems to have accumulated wealth in their own right in addition to inheriting it.

There is a theme of envy in the accounts of Isaac and Jacob. The Philistines envied Isaac (Gen.26:14); as (we can assume) Laban did Jacob; Rachel envied Leah (30:1); Joseph's brothers envied him (37:11; Acts 7:9). Family friction certainly stalked the generations. Jacob against Esau, Isaac against Jacob, Ishmael against Isaac, Sarah against Hagar, Joseph's brothers amongst themselves (Gen.45:24). Envy of Israel by the world and friction within Israel has been a continued characteristic (what similarities with spiritual Israel?). Yet there was also a soft streak there; Esau and Jacob evidently had a certain affection for each other and willingness to truly forgive (Esau more so than Jacob!); Abraham truly cared for Lot's fate in Sodom on at least two occasions; and the brothers genuinely cared for Benjamin and the grief of their father.

27:5,6. " By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (Heb. 11:20). Yet the record of this in Gen. 27 doesn't paint Isaac in a very positive light. " Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Gen. 25:28). The AVmg. seems to bring out Isaac's superficiality: " Isaac loved Esau, because venison was in his mouth" . This seems to connect with the way Esau threw away his birthright for the sake of food in his mouth. Esau was evidently of the flesh, whilst Jacob had at least some potential spirituality. Yet Isaac preferred Esau. He chose to live in Gerar (Gen. 26:6), right on the border of Egypt- as close as he could get to the world, without crossing the line. And he thought nothing of denying his marriage to Rebekah, just to save his own skin (Gen. 26:7). So it seems Isaac had some marriage problems; the record speaks of " Esau his son" and " Jacob (Rebekah's) son" (Gen. 27:5,6). The way Jacob gave Isaac wine " and he drank" just before giving the blessings is another hint at some unspirituality (Gen. 27:25). Isaac seems not to have accepted the Divine prophecy concerning his sons: " the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23), seeing that it was his intention to give Esau the blessings of the firstborn, and thinking that he was speaking to Esau, he gave him the blessing of his younger brothers (i.e. Jacob) serving him (Gen. 27:29 cp. 15). *And yet*, and this is my point, Isaac's blessing of the two boys is described as an act of faith; even though it was only one of his passing moments of faith and was done with an element of disbelief in God's word of prophecy concerning the elder serving the younger, and perhaps under the influence of alcohol. Yet according to Heb. 11:20, this blessing was done with faith; *at that very point in time*, Isaac had faith. So God's piercing eye saw through the haze of

alcohol, through Isaac's liking for the good life, through Isaac's unspiritual liking for Esau, through his marriage problem, through his lack of faith that the elder must serve the younger, and discerned that there was some faith in that man Isaac; and then holds this up as a stimulant for our faith, centuries later! Not only should we be exhorted to see the good side in our present brethren; but we can take comfort that this God is our God.

The way Jacob is described at the time as "smooth" (27:11), without a covering of hair, may be a hint that he needed a covering of atonement.

27:12 See on 25:31

His proud claim to his father that "I have done according as thou badest me" (27:19) when he had effectively done nothing of the sort was the basis for the character of the elder brother in the Lord's parable (Lk. 15:29). Time and again, Jacob emphasizes his works: "I have *done* according as thou badest me (27:19)...my days (of service) are fulfilled (therefore) give me my wife...did not I serve with thee for Rachel? (notice Jacob's legalism; 29:21,25)...give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee...thou knowest my service...how I have served thee (30:25-33)...with all my power I have served your father (31:6). This trust in his own works was what prevented Jacob from a full faith in the promises. It was only the night of wrestling and his subsequent handicap that drove it from him.

27:20 your God- This is almost cynical; the sort of thing an unbaptized child of a believer might say to their parents.

27:28 There are many examples of where God worked through Jacob's weakness, and blessed him in spite of it, imputing righteousness to Jacob. Thus Jacob's use of red stew to wrest the birthright from his red brother was used by God to give him the birthright (the words for "stew" and "Esau" are related), even though Paul evidently disapproved of Jacob's attitude (Rom. 12:20 surely alludes here); his evil deception of his father was used by God to grant him the physical blessing (27:28 is confirmed by God in Dt. 33:28), even though at the time he was dressed like a goat (27:16), connecting himself with fallen Adam and the rejected at the day of judgment; "Deceiving and being deceived" certainly rings bells with Jacob (2 Tim. 3:13)

The record of Isaac's blessing of Jacob (27:29) is framed to portray Jacob as a type of Christ: "Let people serve thee" = Zech. 8:23; Is. 60:12 "nations bow down to thee" = Ps. 72:11; "Be Lord over thy brethren" = Phil. 2:11; "Let thy mother's sons bow down to thee" = 1 Cor. 15:7.

Jacob's basic dishonesty is seen by the way in which Esau begged Jacob for the "red pottage", which he thought was a kind of blood soup [a strange thing for Yahweh's people to be eating at the time!]- and yet Jacob actually only gave him a dish of lentils. This would explain why Esau later claimed he had been twice deceived by Jacob (Gen. 27:36). The mere sale of the birthright was hardly deception; but if the bitterness of it all was that even in that hard bargain, Jacob didn't really give Esau the food he craved... then we can understand Esau feeling Jacob had twice deceived him.

At the time of Jacob's deception, Esau lifted up his voice and wept (27:38); and this is picked up in Heb. 12:17 as a warning to all those who would fritter away their spirituality for sensuality. The faithlessness of Jacob is disregarded, and the emphasis is placed upon Esau.

Jacob self-admittedly didn't believe as he slept that night at Bethel. But just days before that, as Jacob sheepishly stood before his sorrowful, betrayed father; right there, right then, God promised Jacob that he would become " a multitude (LXX *ekklēsia*) of people" (28:3), words which could only become true through their application to Christ.

Jacob's sleeping with a stone as his pillow is hardly a natural thing to do- but it was done in order to induce dreams and revelations from the gods (28:11). And the one true God responded to Jacob, by showing him Angels ascending from him to God, and Angels descending from God to Jacob in response. It wasn't the other way around- because surely the idea was to show Jacob that his prayers really were being heard, Angels were in touch with God about them, and God was zealously responding even then through Angelic providence. Yet all this was done by God when Jacob was so far from Him. Just as a patient and loving father bears with his child, so God bore with Jacob; and He does with us too, and we are to reflect this in our dealings with our brethren.

28:12 The idea of a stairway leading into Heaven of course has obvious connections with the ziggurats of those times. But note that those stairways had a temple on the ground immediately where the stairway started, and led up to a temple at the summit. On a human level, Jacob's subconscious was thinking of pagan temple systems. But God turned all this around. For the man Jacob lying there that night, in all his weakness, was a temple, connected by the Angels to Yahweh's Heavenly temple. And we too in all our weaknesses are the temples of God on this earth. Thus his idolatrous dream of a Ziggurat was turned into an assurance of Divine care for him, the shrine which topped Mesopotamian ziggurats being turned by God in the vision into the throne of Yahweh. Indeed, 'Babylon' meant "gate of God", and in thinking that he was at heaven's gates, Jacob was confusing Babylon and the true city of God. But still God worked through all this.

It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. The vision of Jacob's ladder showed the Angels coming and going, sometimes physically present with us, sometimes not. We read that the Angels are "sent forth" to gather us to judgement; thus Jesus will come at a time when the Angel is not physically next to us; we know it will be at a time when we are not particularly prepared for His coming- at a mundane moment like when working in the field or sleeping, so that to some extent all the virgins are slumbering, as in the parable; i. e. we will not be in a moment of crisis when we have the Angel physically next to us. Gen. 28:13-15 are the words of the Angel to Jacob: "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of". God manifested through Jacob's specific guardian Angel then goes on to say, v. 15, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken of unto thee". At the end of his life, as we showed earlier, Jacob mentions the presence of the Angel which he had sensed all through his life. But that one Angel controlled the multitude of Angels which he saw that night in vision ministering to him. See on Gen. 18:10

28:14- see on 12:3

28:17 dreadful- Jacob feared God with the fear of one who has no real relationship with Him

28:18- see on Jn. 1:50

28:20- see on 48:20; Jer. 10:16

As Jacob set out to relatives in a distant land, hoping to find a wife, he was fully aware that he was in principle replicating his father's experience. When he spoke of God keeping him "in this way that I go" and bringing him again "to my father's house" (28:20,21), his mind was on the story he had so often heard of how God lead Abraham's servant in "the right way" and leading back home with a wonderful wife for Isaac (24:27,40,42,48,56). When at this stage in life (he was 77, remember) things suddenly took a different turn, his great hope was that God would bring him back safely "again to my father's house in peace" (28:21); he wanted to go back to the stay-at-home life. What God put him through in the rest of his life was the exact opposite of this. He says that if God does this, he will "surely give the tenth unto thee" (28:22 cp. 14:20)- exactly as granddad Abraham had done (14:20), who had doubtless told Jacob this many a time as they 'dwelled together in tents' (Heb. 11:9).

28:20 "bread...raiment". "If God will be with me...and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on...then shall Yahweh be my God" (28:20) is simply incredible; 'if God will really look after me, which includes giving me food and clothes, if He's as good as His word, then I'll accept Him as my God'. And yet Paul speaks of how we should serve our Master well, especially if he is our brother (alluding to Jacob and Laban), and "having food and raiment be content" (1 Tim. 6:2,8), as if the fact Jacob only expected food and clothing from God was a sign of his unmaterialism. And yet at the very time Jacob said those words, he only half believed, and the next 20 years of his life were devoted to accumulating far more than just food and clothing. And yet his words regarding food and raiment, sandwiched as they are between much that is wrong, are treated as a reflection of his spirituality.

Having heard the promises concerning his future seed and the present protection God would grant him, Jacob immediately seized on the latter: "If God will be with me...then shall Yahweh be my God" (28:20,21). He brushed past the implications of Messiah, although later he came to see that these were the most fundamental things God had promised. The way he raised up (cp. resurrection) the pillar and anointed it at this time may have shown a faint conception of Messiah, but this took years to seriously develop.

28:20-22 "If God... then...". The implication was that Jacob didn't consider Yahweh to be his God at that time. He was not totally committed to Yahweh as his God (28:20). The fact he promises to give a tenth to God *in the future* suggests that he did not then consider God to be his King, for the idea of tithing seems to have been established before the Law of Moses was given (as were many other elements of that Law; 14:20). Jacob's words sound as if he believed in 'God' as a kind of force or spirit, but did not have Yahweh as his personal God. And yet God had promised Abraham that He would be the God of his seed (17:7,8); Jacob was aware of these promises, and yet he is showing

that he did not accept their personal relevance to him at this time. The fact at the end he does call God his God reveals that he then accepted the Abrahamic promises as relevant to him personally. His offer to give a tithe to God if God delivered him would have been understood in those days as saying that Yahweh would then be his *king* (cp. 1 Sam. 8:15,17); and yet he evidently felt that Yahweh wasn't then his King. There is no record that Jacob ever did build a temple or tithe; but at the end of his life he realizes that God had kept *His* side of the deal, in that He had been with him and fed him all his life long. The fact he hadn't kept his side of the deal made Jacob realize the huge grace of God...

The covenant God made with Abraham was similar in style to covenants made between men at that time; and yet there was a glaring difference. Abraham was not required to do anything or take upon himself any obligations. Circumcision [cp. baptism] was to remember that this covenant of grace had been made. It isn't part of the covenant [thus we are under this same new, Abrahamic covenant, but don't require circumcision]. Perhaps this was why Yahweh but not Abraham passed between the pieces, whereas usually both parties would do so. The promises to Abraham are pure, pure grace. Sadly Jacob didn't perceive the wonder of this kind of covenant- his own covenant with God was typical of a human covenant, when he says that *if* God will give him some benefits, then he will give God some (Gen. 28:20). Although he knew the covenant with Abraham, the one way, gracious nature of it still wasn't perceived by him.

Because of the great importance of Angels or a specific Angel in our lives, many of God's people seem to have conceived of God in terms of an Angel. Jacob (Gen. 48:15) and the patriarchs are clear examples. The extent of this is shown by Jacob vowing to his Angel at Bethel that "if God (the Angel) be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go. . . so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord (Yahweh) be my God" (Gen. 28:20,21). That the 'God' was definitely the Angel is shown by Gen. 31:11,13: "The Angel of God spake unto (Jacob). . . I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me". So was Jacob promising his Angel that if He protected him, "then shall Yahweh be my Elohim (Angel)"- i. e. 'then I will recognize Yahweh is behind you, and I will relate to Him as I do to you'?

Gen. 28:20,21 re. Jacob

He is with me

He will keep me

He will give me bread to eat

I come again to my father's house in peace

Psalms 23 re. David

For You art with *me* (i.e. just as You were with Jacob)

He makes me lie down, he leads me, he restores my life

He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies

I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever

David was a man who saw the height of Jacob, perceiving Jacob as our example, and the deep significance of his spiritual growth as our pattern. His almost fanatic devotion to " the Law" would have included the record of Jacob- around a fifth of " the Law" which he studied all the day (and deep into the night watches).

The repeating similarities between our lives and those of others also reveal to us that God at times arranges for us to suffer from our *alter ego*- persons who behave similarly to us, and who through those similarities cause us suffering. In this way we are taught the error of our ways, both past and present. It seems that Jacob the deceiver suffered in this way from Laban the deceiver- in order to teach him and cause his spiritual growth. For example, as Jacob deceived his blind father relating to an important family matter, so Laban deceived Jacob in the darkness of the wedding night. And Jacob learnt from this- whereas Laban [so it seems] just didn't "get it". Indeed, so many themes repeated in Jacob's life in order to teach him. For example, when he first meets Rachel, there are three other flocks of sheep waiting to be watered (Gen. 29:2); but the implication of Gen. 29:10 is that Jacob rolled away the stone from the well and watered them and ignored the other three flocks. But did not this stone return upon his own head when God rolled away the reproach of the other three women in Jacob's life (Leah and the two servant girls) but not that of Rachel, who initially remained barren?

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"Rebekah's son" (29:12) - not Jacob ben-Isaac- note the emphasis on Jacob's psychological domination by his mother- Laban, "his mother's brother" 3 x (29:10). Rebekah rejected the promise of 25:23 in ch.27; as Jacob in 33:3-5. There is sustained emphasis on Jacob's obedience to his parents, especially to his mother (27:8,13,43; 28:7). The whole story is a foretaste of the issues involved with Christians and parental expectation in our day. It might not be going too far to say that he grew up far too much under her thumb; he meekly obeyed her faithless suggestion that he deceive his father into granting him the blessing, content with her assurance that it would be mum's sin, not his (and I imagine her pecking him on the cheek as she gave him the tray with Isaac's food on). No wonder he fell madly in love at first sight, when he first saw the girl he knew his mother wanted him to marry. Jacob introduces himself as "Rebekah's son" (29:12), although it would have been more normal to describe himself as Jacob ben-Isaac. 29:10 labours the point three times that Laban was "his *mother's* brother". The fact Deborah, his mother's nurse, was taken under the wing by Jacob, further suggests his very close bond with his mother; he buried Deborah under Allon-Bachuth- 'the oak of his (Jacob's) weeping' (35:8). Jacob struggled to accept his father's God as his God. And yet he in so many ways is portrayed as deeply influenced by Rebekah his mother.

29:18 Jacob had been promised that he was to "let people serve you" (27:29) and yet he effectively said he didn't want that promise, by serving Laban for a wife (29:18,25,27); at the end he was

brought through life's experiences to see that the promises are the basis of life, and that we must let God fulfill them to us.

29:30 Jacob was under the one man: one woman ideal of Genesis; and yet he evidently didn't take this too seriously. His mad infatuation with Rachel meant that he thought nothing of polygamy. The idea of accepting one's married circumstances for the sake of principle (a common 21st century believers' cross) was obviously foreign to our Jacob. Many aspects of the Mosaic Law were already in place before it was pronounced to Moses; the prohibition on marrying a second wife who was the sister of the first wife could well have been known among God's people in Jacob's time, seeing that it was a precept based on the principles of Eden (Lev. 18:17,18). "It is wickedness" was God's comment to Moses, and there is no reason to think that His essential moral judgment on this kind of thing has ever changed much. Yet Jacob thought nothing of breaching this command, and committing this "wickedness". Leah's reaction to Jacob's evident favouritism for Rachel was to become obsessed with having children. When she failed to conceive, she panicked that she was barren, and therefore asked Jacob to have intercourse with her servant Zilpah in order to produce children. During the first seven years of her marriage, she produced 6 sons and 1 daughter. This indicated not only an incredible fertility, but also a high womanly status in those times, seeing that she produced so many more sons than daughters. The fact none of her children died in babyhood was also remarkable for the times. Her fertility became proverbial in later Israel (Ruth 4:11). And yet despite this evident fecundity, whenever she thought she had failed to conceive, she asked Jacob to have intercourse with Zilpah. Despite knowing her fertility, Jacob did so. It seems he sacrificed basic principles in order to placate a neurotic wife who, it would seem, he didn't care too much for anyway, seeing he made it plain he had never wanted to marry her in the first place (29:25,31). The whole sense that we get is that his relationship with Zilpah was unnecessary, and he was far too casual in his attitude to it.

The way Leah comments about Jacob to Rachel "Now will my husband love me...now this time will my husband be joined unto me" (Gen. 29:32-34) all imply that Jacob's marriage was in a mess. Jacob, Rachel and Leah were indeed a tangled web. God joins together a married couple; yet Jacob, apparently, neither loved his wife Leah / Rachel, nor had allowed God to join him unto her in emotional bonding. And there he was, having kids by his domestic servants as well, his boss's cast-offs. And God *loved* this man, and worked with him *so* patiently, to build the house of Israel His people. There's comfort enough for every man and woman, reading this record. The way Jacob is simply described as the one whom God loved in Ps. 47:4 is majestic in its brevity. God loved Jacob. He really did. Simple as that. When Jacob is the one presented as having struggled with God more than any other.

The evidence seems to be that until he left home, Jacob was influenced by the idolatrous thinking of the surrounding world. For the next 20 years, he more tacitly went along with these things being practiced in his family. The mandrakes used by Leah were not just aphrodisiacs, but were believed to have the magical ability to induce fertility (30:14). This pagan nonsense was believed by Leah and Reuben, and tacitly gone along with by Jacob- although God worked through these wrong ideas,

apparently uncorrected, in order to bring about His purpose. And yet from these mixed up women God built the house of Israel.

"Now will my husband dwell with me" (Gen. 30:20) surely implies that Jacob and Leah had effectively split up.

When Jacob asks Laban to allow him to leave, he uses very similar words to those used by Eliezer when he asked Laban's family to let Rebekah leave to go marry Isaac:

Eliezer in Gen. 24

"Send me back" (*shallehuni*) 24:54

"Let me go (*shallehuni*) that I may go (*w'eleka*) to my master" 24:56

Laban's blessing of Rebekah 24:60

The servant "went his way (*wayyelak*)" 24:61

Jacob in Gen. 30

"Send me away" (*shalleheni*) 30:25

"that I may go (*w'eleka*)... let me go (*w'eleka*)" 30:26

Laban's blessing of his grandchildren and daughters 31:55

"Jacob went on his way" (32:1)

Intentional or not, the inspired record strives to bring out the similarities. The lesson is that culturally, Jacob was very much his mother's son- just as those raised Christian today may be culturally Christian, and yet not truly accept their parents' God as theirs until they pass through the valley of the shadows, the school of hard knocks.

30:26 See on 25:31

30:30 blessed- Jacob saw God as the one who gave physical blessing; he saw the promises of Divine blessing as primarily re. material blessing. He missed their basic import, which was of forgiveness and the Kingdom (Acts 3:26,27)

Jacob thought that God had blessed Laban in fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises, simply because Laban's flocks had greatly increased; he saw the " blessing" as physical prosperity (30:30). He was sharing the over-physical view of the promises which his father Isaac held, who mentioned the promised blessing as essentially concerning material blessings in this life (28:3,4). As with David and Solomon, the weakness of the parents was repeated in the child. This perception of the promises as only for his personal, physical benefit was clearly evidenced in the way in which he was so bent on obtaining the birthright from Esau.

"Now when shall I provide for mine own house also?" (30:30) Jacob slyly asked Laban, and on this pretext spent then next six years using some pagan myth about cattle breeding to take Laban's cattle from him and amass them for himself. What he came to think of as " his flock" (31:4) was a reflection of his mad materialism; he used all his (considerable) human strength to achieve it, and then turned round and said he had only been serving Laban with it (31:6). Yet these very words are alluded to in 1 Tim. 5:8 as an example for faithful men to copy; indeed, Paul says, if you don't do as Jacob did, you're worse than a pagan! And yet the Spirit

through Paul also recognized the weak side of Jacob; " evil men...deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13) is a sure reference to Jacob.

30:33 See on 25:31

This attitude that *he* could bring about the fulfillment of God's promises through his own efforts was the outcome of Jacob's self-righteousness. This is clearly shown when he says that his righteousness had caused his cattle to increase (30:33), although he believed that this increase of cattle was due to his receipt of the promised Divine blessing (32:10).

Jacob's superstitious use of mandrakes and poplar rods was used by God to fulfill the physical aspect of the promised blessing; he used " white" rods to take power from Laban, the " white" one, and to give him white animals- and God worked through it (30:37).

The flocks conceiving in front of the rods / poles (Gen. 30:39) surely has reference to the concept of the pagan *asherah* poles, before which worshippers had sex. Jacob was clearly influenced by this wrong idea- and yet God patiently worked with him through it. Jacob appears to have had the idea that what a female thinks about or has before her eyes at the time of labour or conception, will affect the child. And so he peeled stripes off the rods so they appeared 'ringstraked', or striped- in the belief that if the female cattle gave birth or conceived looking at them, then the offspring would be striped too, like the striped rods. However, the connection with the asherah poles suggests that Jacob's beliefs were associated with pagan fertility myths, rather than faith in Yahweh the God of his fathers. Mic. 1:5 explicitly links Jacob's sin with idolatry. Jacob's superstitious ideas about the cattle mating were used by God to teach Jacob that He would bless him physically, as a prelude to the more important spiritual blessings which Jacob was later to value. There is no biological truth at all in what he did. Jacob wasn't specifically corrected for his paganism; later he must have realized the depth of God's grace in still working through him at this time, still giving him blessing.

31:5 my father- not 'my God'.

There is something almost childishly proud about the way Jacob sets off *his* father against the deceitful father of his wives (31:5-7). Laban mocks this almost immature homesickness: " thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house" (31:30).

Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams..." (31:12) is a promise couched in the language with which God invited Abraham to lift up his eyes and behold the land which He would give him (13:14,15). Even whilst Jacob was trying to fulfill God's promises for Him, still half worshipping idols, God gently went along with him to teach him firstly that He *would* keep promises, and then to show Jacob the more spiritual essence of it all.

Jacob And Jesus In Gen. 31,32

Jacob as he approached Esau was weak; he prayed for deliverance, but divided up his family as if he doubted whether God would hear him. The Angel met him, representing Esau (33:10), and would have killed him (cp. Moses) had not Jacob wrestled with him in prayer and begged for the blessing of forgiveness (Hos. 12:4-6). And yet the record of Jacob

meeting Esau is shot through with reference to Christ in Gethsemane; the Son of God at one of his finest moments:

Jacob	Jesus		
31:14	Night time breaking of bread and killing of animals	32:8	Zech. 13:7
32:1 LXX Jacob went on his way and saw the camp of God; an Ezekiel 1 type vision of Angels	As Christ in Gethsemane	32:13	Cp. Kedron
32:6; 33:4	Cp. Judas, Mk. 14:45; Jn. 18:3	32:17	Jn. 16:5
32:3	Lk. 10:1; 22:8	Made a prince afterwards	Acts 3:15; 5:31; Rev. 1:5
Jacob referred to the promises (32:9,10)	As Christ's mind was full of the promises at the end (Ps. 69:13; 89:49; 77:8; 44:4,24; Is. 63:16)		

An example of following the negative spiritual traits of our forbears is seen in Jacob's penchant for materialism. This was a weakness of the whole Abraham family; a specific word is used about how they "gathered" material wealth. Abraham did it (12:5), and so did Jacob (31:18). The list of what they "gathered" is almost identical (24:35 cp. 30:43). Faithless fear (cp. Dt. 20:8; Mt. 25:25; Rev. 21:8) was another characteristic; in Abraham (15:1; 20:11); Isaac (26:7,24; 31:42,53); and followed by Jacob (28:17; 31:31; 32:7,11; 41:3).

31:29 God of your father- That Jacob worshipped the God of his father rather than his own God was well known. "Your (plural) father" (cp. "thee" in the previous and following verses) may suggest that Jacob was confident enough of his father's God to have introduced it to his family, although he himself still had not reached the point where he had made this God completely his own.

When Laban sets out to attack Jacob, it was clearly in his power to kill him. But the incident of him accusing Jacob of stealing his idols, him publicly searching the whole camp, feeling (31:34 Heb.) absolutely everything, and not finding them, probably led to a loss of face which meant he couldn't do what he planned to Jacob. Jacob then bursts out in proud, arrogant denunciation of Laban- not realizing that his beloved, idolatrous Rachel couldn't bear to be without those idols, and had stolen them. Despite Rachel's deceit and idolatry, and Jacob's arrogance, God worked through all this to save them. The way God works with us in our weakness, leading us on, hoping we will later reflect back and marvel at His grace and patience... all this God works oftentimes with man. Not only should we be deeply humbled as a result of our self-examination. We ought to reflect this kind of patience and going along with weakness in the hope of later change in our attitude to our brethren.

Jacob was afflicted with legalism, and struggled all his life to understand and accept grace. The legalistic attitude of Jacob and his family is brought out by the behaviour of his wives as well as himself when they are caught up with by Laban as recorded in Gen. 31. The society in which they lived had codified legal practices, as has been established by archaeological research into contemporary towns in the area. For example, part of the bride price had to be kept by the wife personally; and thus Rachel and Leah accuse their father of taking away from them that which was rightfully theirs. Likewise, according to the Nuzi documents, daughters and sons-in-law had legal title to part of the father's estate, and this was proven by their possession of the household idols. Hence Jacob and his wives stole those idols. E.A. Speiser quotes par. 266 of the Code of Hammurabi, which states: "If there occurs in the fold an act of god, or a lion takes a life, the shepherd [cp. Jacob] shall clear himself before the deity; the owner of the fold [cp. Laban] must then accept the loss incurred". It was surely with allusion to this that Jacob complained that he as the shepherd had had to bear the loss of Laban's lost cattle (Gen. 31:39).

31:42 Again, not *my* God. And he saw God as the supplier of physical blessing; he understood the promise to Abraham that " I will be with thee" as referring to blessing of cattle more than anything more spiritual. See on 25:31

Gen. 31:42,53 "the fear" see on Ex. 23:27

31:53 This seems to be emphasizing that Laban swore by his fathers' gods, because he knew no better, and Jacob did likewise. A Baptist is a Baptist because his father is, and at the beginning of spiritual life, a Christian can be one for no better reason than his parents are. Jacob was still at this stage in middle age. And so so many of us must pass through that inevitable growth curve of Jacob.

That Abraham did finally break with his family is hinted at by the way that Laban speaks of "the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor- may they judge between us (Gen. 31:53 Heb.). Laban recognized that Nahor and Abraham worshipped different gods- whereas we know that initially, they worshipped the same gods.

Jacob unashamedly swore " by the fear of his father Isaac" (31:54); the picture of his father trembling in fear of God when he realized his superficiality stayed with Jacob (27:33). It seems he spoke publicly of God as the God of his father, for this is the term Laban used to him (31:29). The influence of his father and grandfather lasted a lifetime; even in old age, he

feared to go down to Egypt because of the precedents set by the bad experience of Isaac and Abraham there; it seems that he delayed to obey Joseph's invitation to visit Egypt because of this, and was possibly rebuked by Yahweh for this: " Jacob, Jacob (such repetition is often a rebuke), Fear not to go down into Egypt" (46:3). Likewise Christians live out parental expectation very often, without much personal faith.

32:3 messengers. Through the whole incident with the wrestling Angel, Jacob was led to understand something of the meaning of the Gen. 28 vision of a ladder with Angels (*mal'akim*) ascending *from* him to Heaven and returning to him. He sends messengers (*mal'akim*) to Esau (Gen. 32:3)- and they return to him as if it were as a mighty host of an angry army. Hence he named the place Mahanaim, two camps / hosts- for he perceived that Esau's host was indeed the host of God in His Angels. And thus he comments that he saw the face of the Angel / God as if it were the face of Esau (Gen. 33:10). And so God can masterfully arrange incidents in our lives too, which are somehow the summation of all our previous encounters and interactions with people... to teach us His way. This is why there is sometimes a sense of *deja vu* in our lives.

Jacob evidently forgot the promise that the elder would serve the younger when he sent messengers to Esau, describing himself as Esau's servant, and Esau as his Lord (32:4); yet just a few hours later he was pleading in almost unparalleled intensity to receive the promised blessings of forgiveness. Such oscillating faith and perception of the promises is tragically a characteristic of Israel after the Spirit too.

32:4 wrestled. Through this, Jacob learnt the real import of the promises. He realized that all his life, he had been wrestling with God, his Angel, and he now came to beg his God for the blessing of forgiveness, implying he had repented. The Hebrew for " wrestle" can mean both to wrestle and also simply to cling on to. It seems he started wrestling, and ended up clinging on to the Angel, desperately begging for salvation and forgiveness. His great physical strength (remember how he moved the huge stone from the well, 29:2) was redirected into a spiritual clinging on to the promises of forgiveness and salvation. And this will be our pattern of growth too. It seems Jacob was familiar with the idea of wrestling with God as being related to prayer. Rachel speaks of how " with wrestlings of God have I wrestled...and I have prevailed" in obtaining a child (30:8; AV " great" = Heb. 'elohim'). We know from Hos. 12 that Jacob became aware that he was wrestling with an Angel, not just a man. His wrestling is therefore to be understood as prayer and pleading, although doubtless it started as a physical struggle with an unknown stranger, who he later recognized as an Angel, and then perceived as God Himself. The Angel came to Jacob with the desire to kill him, as Esau (whom the Angel represented) approached him in the same spirit. It was by Jacob's desperate clinging on to God, his pleading, his intense prayer (Hos. 12:4) that he changed God's intention, after the pattern of Moses in later years. The sentence of death we received in

Adam perhaps doesn't mean as much to us as it should. Our reversal of it will involve quite some struggle.

Wrestling as prayer: Jacob wrestled / struggled in prayer with the Angel. Consider the Biblical emphasis on the idea of struggle, quite apart from the fact that Jacob's night of wrestling is a cameo of the experience of all who would be counted among the Israel of God. Job felt that his prayers were a striving with God (33:13). Christ's prayers in Gethsemane are described as a "striving" (Heb. 12:4); Paul asks the Romans to *strive* in prayer, so that he may be *delivered from unbelievers* (cp. Esau), and *return* to them with a *blessing* (Rom. 15:30). This is all allusion to Jacob. Likewise Epaphras 'strove' for the Colossians in his prayers (Col. 4:12 AVmg.). Our prayers are to give the Father no "rest" (Is. 62:7), no cessation from violent warfare (Strong).

32:5 God's sight- see on Is. 6:7

"Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed" (32:7) is the basis of "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:7), the "time of trouble" from which Israel will be Angelically "delivered" (Dan. 12:1) after the pattern of Jacob. Yet this "time of trouble" is picked up by the Lord in Mt. 24:21 and applied to the time of great tribulation "such as was not" which will encompass all God's people, natural *and* spiritual. What this means is that the Jacob experience must be gone through by all of us, natural and spiritual Israel; and this will entail a desperate praying to God and an earnest repentance, recognizing that we have lived out our parental expectations for too long; and above all, a realization that "this God is *our* God", a personalizing of God, a grasping of the wondrous reality of those things which we have previously seen as only so much correct theology and logical theory.

32:9 He came to see that 'God' was Yahweh (cp. notes on 28:20); he saw that there was only one 'God', and that the vague sense of 'God' which he had was in fact 'Yahweh'. But still he speaks of this Yahweh-God as someone else's God.

"With this staff...I became (many)" (32:10). Strong comments that the word for "staff" here suggests a magical, pagan stick associated with fertility, coming from a root meaning 'to germinate'. The same word occurs when we read that Jacob put the animals before the "rods"; it seems this is an intensive plural for 'the great rod', i.e. his staff. Yet, fascinatingly enough, at the very point when Jacob leaves home to start his wilderness journey with only (in his eyes) his pagan staff to bring him good luck, God as it were takes a snapshot of him, and asks Israel to leave Egypt with a staff in their hands- a strange request, surely, unless it was intended to drive their minds back to Jacob, asking them to emulate his example. Jacob and idolatry go together.

32:10 See on 25:31

Jacob saw material prosperity as an indicator of the fulfillment of the promises to him. Because he *was* physically blessed in his life, he came to feel that the promises had been fulfilled, and therefore he almost lost sight of the future aspect of our relationship with God. There are powerful lessons for

us here. He saw the promises (" mercies...truth") as having been fulfilled to him already (32:10), and therefore he needed the night of wrestling to bring him to the realization that the blessing of *forgiveness* (Mic. 7:20), with its eternal, future implications, was what the promises are really all about.

Because Jacob saw, for much of his life, that the fulfillment of God's promises depended on his effort, he so often doubted them; because, of course, men can never make enough effort. Thus he asks God to deliver him from Esau, because if Esau killed him, the covenant would not be fulfilled. " I fear him, lest he come and smite *me* (first!) and the mother with the children" (32:11). Whether he died or not that night would not have nullified God's promise that his seed would become a multitude (32:12). But first and foremost, Jacob saw the promises as offering him personal, temporal blessing, rather than having a firm faith in their future implications. His wrestling with the Angel was a cameo of this whole attitude; he thought that the promised blessing of God could be achieved through *his* wrestling and struggling. This is why, in the course of that night, he stopped wrestling with the Angel and clung on to him with tears, begging that through pure grace he might receive the blessing (Hos. 12:2-4). Before the wrestling began, Jacob evidently felt that basically, the promises to him had been fulfilled in the material prosperity which he had: " I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and all the truth (" mercy and truth" is a common idiom for the promises) which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands" (32:10).

There can be no doubt that the wrestling experience of our lives will result in our rejection of materialism, and wholehearted devotion to the more spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Jacob began that night by pleading: " *Deliver* me from Esau" (32:11), and he concludes by marveling that his life is " preserved (s.w. " deliver") from *God's* wrath (32:30); his concern with physical problems and human relationships became dwarfed by his awareness of his need for reconciliation with *God*. In essence, this is Paul's teaching concerning peace in the NT; if we have peace with *God*, the wonder of this will result in us having peace in any situation. This is easy to write, so easy. And yet it is still true. If we see the seriousness of sin, and the wonder of being in free fellowship with the Father and Son, we will have peace. The wholehearted repentance and clinging on to God of Jacob that night is used in Hosea 12 as an appeal to all Israel to repent as our father Jacob did, and rise to his level of maturity.

The promise to make Abraham's seed as the sand of the sea, he saw as implying that his children would not be physically harmed (32:12); yet the New Testament teaches that this promise fundamentally refers to Messiah, and those of all nations who would become " in him" . At the end of his life, it seems that Jacob learnt this.

32:25 thigh- The sign of circumcision was given as the confirmation that the promise regarding a son would be fulfilled. Abraham had to figuratively cut off part of his vital organ in order to be assured that *God* would provide a son for him. Accepting God's promises means that we too must give up our human strength and attempts to fulfil them. Likewise when Jacob was given the repeated

covenant acceptance, he was wounded in his "thigh" and thereafter walked with a limp. "It is not impossible that the damage to the "thigh" means Jacob was assaulted in his vital organs. Thus, the "limp" refers to the mark left on his very manhood and future" .

There is reason to think that the Angel also reminded Jacob of his father Isaac. The way Jacob begs the Angel to bless him recalls how he so earnestly wanted to obtain his father's blessing. Jacob's pleading for blessing with the Angel would have reminded him of Esau's desperate pleading for the blessing from Isaac. All these things were restimulated in Jacob's mind by the wrestling. The Angel asks him what his name is (32:27), in exactly the same way as Isaac had asked him 20 years before. At that time he had lied. But now he truthfully answers the Angel: " Jacob" , the deceiver. And then he begs for the blessing of forgiveness. He had struggled with men, with Isaac and Isaac's influence of Jacob's spirituality, with his brother Esau, with Laban, and with himself. And the Angel said that in all these struggles with men, Jacob had ultimately won in that he had confessed he was a deceiver, he had accepted the perversity of his nature.

32:29 Jacob knew the Yahweh Name, he knew the name El Shaddai (Ex. 6:3); surely he was asking for a deeper exposition of the Name. He realized his need to draw closer to God. But the Angel grants him the blessing of forgiveness, and says that Jacob doesn't need such an exposition, because he now knows the character of God: he has received such grace and forgiveness and future assurance. This is the Name / character of God revealed. Thus Jacob realized that he knew the theory of God, but not the practice. Latter day Jacob, natural and spiritual, are little better. In so many ways, so often, we know but don't believe; and it has been commonly observed that the problem with us is that we are right in doctrine but very weak in practice. This shouldn't surprise us. It was exactly the characteristic of our father Jacob. But the God of Bethel is our God too, and will bring us through to a deeper maturity. That night, Jacob reached " manhood" , spiritual maturity (Hos. 12:3 RV).

Jacob's comment at the end of the wrestling experience was that " my life is preserved" (32:30); and that Hebrew phrase is so often used by David (Ps. 7:2; 22:20; 25:20; 33:19; 56:13; 86:13; 97:10; 120:2). Likewise Jacob commented that the experience had shown him that God had been gracious unto him (33:11); and *that* Hebrew phrase too is a catch phrase of David's (Ps. 4:1; 6:2; 9:13; 25:16; 26:11; 27:11; 30:8; 31:9 and many others). We too can make Jacob our hero, as David did.

Jacob's new appreciation of the blessing of forgiveness is reflected by the way in which he effectively tells Esau that he is handing back to him the birthright, the physical blessings. The way he bows down seven times to Esau (33:3) is rejecting the blessing he had obtained by deceit from Isaac: " Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you" (27:29). His experience of the blessing of God's grace was sufficient for him, and he rejected all else.

Jacob called Esau his master (33:5), in evident rejection of the Divine promise they both knew: that Esau would serve Jacob (25:23). And yet at this very point, Jacob speaks of " the children which God hath graciously given thy (Esau's) servant" ; and this scene is cited in Is. 8:18 as a type of Christ and his spiritual children of promise. In similar vein, Is. 49:21 uses this scene as a picture of the faithful remnant among Jacob in the last days.

33:10 God's sight- see on Is. 6:7

The approach of Esau in angry judgment reflected God's attitude to Jacob (33:10). Jacob realized that he must " appease" (Heb. *kaphar*, normally translated 'to make atonement') Esau with gifts of animals. This is surely a confession of sin on his part (32:20). But when he offers them to Esau, Esau kindly responds that he "has all". But all the same Jacob wants to make the sacrifice, to give up the material things...and in all this, too, we see an accurate reflection of God's position with Jacob (and indeed all of us).

The Angel commented that Jacob had struggled with both God and men, and had prevailed. Which men? Jacob recognized that the Angel represented Esau (33:10), his brother with whom he had emotionally struggled all his life. The struggle in the womb had been lived out all their lives to this point. Perhaps the Angel's face appeared like that of Esau? Jacob saw the face of the Angel as it were the face of Esau- implying that the Angel he wrestled with was Esau's guardian Angel. He was being more obliquely shown the truth which New Testament passages like 1 Jn. 4:12,20,21 state plainly: that our relationship with our brother is our relationship with God. And Jacob was thus repenting of how badly he'd treated his brother.

33:11 supplication- see on Hos. 12:4

33:11 graciously- Jacob saw God as the one who graciously gave physical blessings, and also as the God who gives spiritual grace / mercy to undeserving sinners like himself. Thus a growing appreciation of grace was a facet of Jacob's perception of God and spiritual growth.

It's a shame that the English translation conceals Jacob's rejection of the physical blessing in 33:11: " Take (51 times translated " take away"), I pray thee, my blessing...because God hath dealt graciously with me, and I have enough (lit. 'all things')". The only ultimately important thing is grace and right standing with God. The Hebrew words translated " take (away)" and " blessing" are exactly the same as in 27:35,36: " (Jacob) came with subtlety, and hath *taken away* thy *blessing*...Is not he rightly named Jacob? he *took away* my birthright, and now he hath *taken away* my *blessing*". Yet now Jacob is saying: 'I have experienced the true grace of God, I stand forgiven before Him, I see His face in His representative Angel (cp. Christ), I therefore have all things, so I don't want that physical, material, temporal blessing I swindled you out of. This is why Jacob pointedly calls Esau his "Lord" in the record. He was accepting Esau as the firstborn. And Paul, in his spiritual maturity, came to the same conclusion; he counted all the materialism of this world as dung, that he might win Christ and be found in him, clothed with his gracious righteousness. Because God had dealt graciously with him, he felt that he had "all" (Gen. 33:11 RVmg.). All he needed was God's grace, and he had that. Rev. 21:7 appears to allude to Jacob by saying that he who overcomes [by wrestling?] shall inherit "all things". We are all to pass through Jacob's lesson; that material advantage is nothing, and God's grace is everything. Truly could Jacob later say, after another gracious salvation, that there God had appeared to Him, had been revealed to him [RV] in the experience of grace (Gen. 35:7).

Jacob, Esau And The Prodigal

The parable of the prodigal contains multiple allusions to the record of Jacob and Esau, their estrangement, and the anger of the older brother [Esau] against the younger brother. There is a younger and an elder son, who both break their relationships with their father, and have an argument over the inheritance issue. Jacob like the prodigal son insults his father in order to get his inheritance. As Jacob joined himself to Laban in the far country, leaving his older brother Esau living at home, so the prodigal glued himself to a Gentile and worked for him by minding his flocks, whilst his older brother remained at home with the father. The fear of the prodigal as he returned home matches that of Jacob as he finally prepares to meet the angry Esau. Jacob's unexpected meeting with the Angel and clinging to him physically is matched by the prodigal being embraced and hugged by his father. Notice how Gen. 33:10 records how Jacob felt he saw the face of Esau as the face of an Angel. By being given the ring, the prodigal "has in effect now supplanted his older brother"; just as Jacob did. As Esau was "in the field" (Gen. 27:5), so was the older brother.

What was the Lord Jesus getting at by framing His story in terms of Jacob and Esau? The Jews saw Jacob as an unblemished hero, and Esau / Edom as the epitome of wickedness and all that was anti-Jewish and anti-God. The Book of Jubilees has much to say about all this, as does the Genesis Rabbah. The Lord is radically and bravely re-interpreting all this. Jacob is the younger son, who went seriously wrong during his time with Laban. We have shown elsewhere how weak Jacob was at that time. Jacob was saved by grace, the grace shown in the end by the Angel with whom he wrestled, and yet who finally blessed him. As Hos. 12:4 had made clear, Jacob weeping in the Angel's arms and receiving the blessing of gracious forgiveness is all God speaking to us. The older brother who refused to eat with his sinful brother clearly represented, in the context of the parable, the Jewish religious leaders. They were equated with Esau- the very epitome of all that was anti-Jewish. And in any case, according to the parable, the hero of the story is the younger son, Jacob, who is extremely abusive and unspiritual towards his loving father, and is saved by sheer grace alone. This too was a radical challenge to the Jewish perception of their ancestral father Jacob.

The parable demonstrates that both the sons despised their father and their inheritance in the same way. They both wish him dead, treat him as if he isn't their father, abuse his gracious love, shame him to the world. Both finally come to their father from working in the fields. Jacob, the younger son, told Laban that "All these years I have served you... and you have not treated me justly" (Gen. 31:36-42). But these are exactly the words of the older son in the parable! The confusion is surely to demonstrate that both younger and elder son essentially held the same wrong attitudes. And the Father, clearly representing God, and God as He was manifested in Christ, sought so earnestly to reconcile both the younger and elder sons. The Lord Jesus so wished the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees to fellowship with the repenting sinners that He wept over Jerusalem; He didn't shrug them off as self-righteous bigots, as we tend to do with such people. He wept for them, as the Father so passionately pours out His love to them. And perhaps on another level we see in all this the desperate desire of the

Father and Son for Jewish-Arab unity in Christ. For the promises to Ishmael show that although Messiah's line was to come through Isaac, God still has an especial interest in and love for all the children of Abraham- and that includes the Arabs. Only a joint recognition of the Father's grace will bring about Jewish-Arab unity. But in the end, it will happen- for there will be a highway from Assyria to Judah to Egypt in the Millennium. The anger of the elder brother was because the younger son had been reconciled to the Father without compensating for what he had done wrong. It's the same anger at God's grace which is shown by the workers who objected to those who had worked less receiving the same pay. And it's the same anger which is shown every time a believer storms out of an ecclesia because some sinner has been accepted back...

33:15 God's sight- see on Is. 6:7

33:20 Elohe-Israel: This seems to have been a flash of spiritual insight, a peak of faith which was not afterwards sustained; not only did Jacob accept the new name God had given him (although he needed reminding of this again in 35:9), he saw that 'God' was his God, the God behind the powerful ones (Angels) who looked after Jacob / Israel. Still he saw God as pre-eminently *physically* powerful, and manifested in many Angels. And still he had not fulfilled his promise to make *Yahweh* his God. Jacob hid behind the idea of God manifestation too long. This is not to say that there is no such thing; but we can take it to such a point where we lose sight of the glorious reality of the one true, real God, who is our God, and who is ultimately *there*, at the back of all the things and ways in which He may be manifested. Jacob saw God manifest in Angels to the point where he failed to see the God who was behind them. Building the altar 'El-elohe-Israel' was his first step towards rectifying this. As time went on, he saw God as one, not as multitudes of Angels, even though he knew from the vision of Bethel that they were all active for him; he saw the El behind the Elohe, and realized that this was Yahweh, his very own God.

There is reason to think that even at the end, Jacob was still in some ways weak. Thus despite his name having been changed from Jacob to Israel, the two terms are used by God in the record in juxtaposition (34:7; 35:22; 46:2, 5,8; 48:2) as if to reflect the way the full change of Jacob would only take place in the Kingdom, when each believer will receive his new name (Rev. 3:12).

34:11 God's sight- see on Is. 6:7

So true to our experience, even after the night of wrestling Jacob slipped back at times into the old way of thinking. His pathetic bleating of 34:30 is a case of this: " / being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against *me* and slay *me*; and / shall be destroyed, / and *my* house" . Just note all those personal pronouns. God had promised to go with him, and the whole tenor of all the promises was that there would come a singular seed from the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who would become a great house, or nation. But in the heat of the moment, all this went out of the window.

The moment of truth came during Jacob's wrestling with the Angel. He realized then that in our relationship with God, it's all or nothing. And after that, he firmly rejected the ways of the world in his own life and that of his family; he made them bury all their idols (35:2). This

connection between the night of wrestling and Jacob's rejection of idols is hinted at in 1 Kings 18:31; here, Israel openly renounce their idolatry and claim to turn to Yahweh with their whole heart. To celebrate this, "Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of *Jacob* unto whom the word of Yahweh came saying, Israel shall be thy name". The change of name that night is associated with Israel's rejection of idolatry. And then finally, at the very end, Jacob realizes his earlier idolatry and confesses it, and emphasizes his utter conviction that there is only one God, the God of his fathers, Yahweh, the God of Messiah, his very own God. Jacob resigned the things of this world for the sake of what was implicit in the promises, when he told his family: "Put away the strange gods that are among you" (Gen. 35:2). These household teraphim would have been the property deeds to Laban's property, but because of what God had promised him at Bethel all those years ago, Jacob was willing to resign all that hope of worldly advantage (35:3).

35:7- see on 33:11

35:11- see on 43:14

There are a few hints that the way of thinking associated with a life of idolatry was still in Jacob. Thus he set a pillar over Rachel's grave (35:14,20); something which was later forbidden under the Law because of its evident association with idolatry (same word in Lev. 26:1; Dt. 12:3; 16:22; 2 Kings 3:2; 10:27). He had done this previously, in a way his forefathers are not recorded as doing (28:18,22; 31:45,51,2).

An example of the way the Spirit frames the record in Jacob's favour is in 37:3: "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age". We have shown that most of Jacob's children were born within a few years of each other, and in any case, Benjamin was the youngest. It seems that the Spirit is almost making a weak excuse for Jacob's favouritism, or perhaps picking up Jacob's self-justification for his favouritism and treating it as if it is valid.

Joseph was likened to a sheaf (37:7)- *Christ was the wave sheaf (Lev. 23:11,12)*

It must have taken Joseph quite some courage to explain the dreams to his brethren. "He dreamed yet another dream, *and* told it his brethren" (37:9). There was quite likely a certain bucking up of courage in the spirit of the Lord Jesus at age 30, when he 'came down from Heaven' and started preaching the glories of his future Kingdom to a cynical Israel. This is our struggle, to tell forth the things revealed to us.

37:10 reveals how Jacob's view of the promises, even at the age of 108, was very much on a surface level: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves unto thee?". Rachel was dead (35:19), and Jacob mocked the suggestion that she would ever "come" to bow to her son.

37:10 Jacob's anger with Joseph's claim that all his brothers would bow down to him is explicable when we remember that Isaac had promised Jacob that this would be *his* blessing (27:29 cp. 37:10). Yet at the end, he realized that the promised blessings didn't *only* apply to him on a personal level, and he even conferred such a blessing on Judah (49:8).

"...but his father observed the saying" (37:11)- *As did Mary, mother of Jesus (Lk. 2:19,51)*

Joseph readily responded to his father's desire that he go to his brethren: "Here am I" (37:13). Isaiah, another type of Christ, uttered similar words before his mission to Israel (Is. 6:8). Yet in both Joseph and Isaiah there must have been a sense of apprehension, sensing the persecution that would come. There was a point when Christ said to God: "Lo, I come..." (Heb. 10:5-7). This would indicate that in line with the typology of Joseph and Isaiah, there was a point when Christ received and responded to His Father's commission. This may have been some time in His teens; perhaps 17, as with Joseph? Or at 30 when he began His ministry and came "into the (Jewish) world" ?

"Go...see whether it be well with thy brethren" (37:14)- *Same Hebrew as 1 Sam. 17:18, also typical of Christ.*

"See whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again" (37:14). Christ was sent to the shepherds and the sheep of Israel. This accounts for the special effort he made to appeal to the Jewish religious leaders, even when it seemed he was wasting time with them.

"When they saw him afar off...they conspired against him to slay him" (37:18)- *"When the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves (i.e. conspired), This is the heir; come, let us kill him" (Mt. 21:38) . Mt. 21:38 is quoting the LXX of Gen. 37:18.*

"Let us slay him...and we will see what will become of his (prophetic, inspired) dreams" (37:20) - *Christ's inspired prophecies of His death and resurrection must have motivated the Jews' slaying of Him*

"They stript Joseph out of his coat" (37:23); was Joseph naked in the pit? - *Same LXX word in Mt. 27:28; was Christ naked on the cross? See Heb. 6:6 "open shame" .*

Throughout the records of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his children there is continual repetition in the manner in which the record is written. This repetition is of both experiences and of the language used to describe those experiences. Gen.39:1- 8 provides an example of this: "Joseph was brought down to Egypt...the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither...down to Egypt" (37:25). "The Lord was with Joseph...and his master saw that the Lord was with him" . "His master the Egyptian...his master" . "Joseph...was a prosperous man...the Lord made all that he did to prosper" . Potiphar "made him overseer over his house...from the time that he had made him overseer in his house" . "All that he had he put into his hand...over all that he had...the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had...he left all that he had in Joseph's hand" . "His hand...into his hand...Joseph's

hand...to my hand" . This kind of linguistic device suggests that the Spirit in Genesis is inviting us to observe the development of theme and to note emphasis. The above example from Joseph's life is one of many such sets of evidence. The repetition of certain descriptions and common experiences in the lives of Abraham's family members is to enable us to build up a very clear picture of what they were like as people. We are being enabled to get to know them as a family. This is necessary for us if we are to realistically obey the New Testament commands to see Abraham and the patriarchs as our spiritual fathers, to model our daily walk upon them, to see in them the examples which should dominate our lives and thinking. The way the record repeats their similar experiences reveals certain family traits; the majority of which are *negative* . This takes some appreciating.

At least 2 of his 10 persecutors were unhappy about what they were doing , and said so (37:22,26). Perhaps the whole group egged each other on to adopt an attitude none were totally happy with in their conscience- *Ditto for first century Israel?*

His brothers said: " He is our brother and our flesh" (37:27)- " *We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones*" (Eph. 5:30)

" Let not our hand be upon him" (37:27). They thought that the rigours of slavery would be enough to kill him- *The Jews handed Jesus over to the Romans. Does the type indicate some of them thought this fact would absolve them of guilt?*

37:28 " And they sat down" after symbolically killing him- Mt. 27:36.; Sold him for pieces of silver- *Ditto for Christ. Jesus was "him...whom they priced on the part of the sons of Israel" (Mt. 27:9 RVmg.). The reference to "the sons of Israel" is surely an allusion to the sons of Jacob selling Joseph for his value.*

" Joseph is...rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes" (37:33,34); Jacob shared in Joseph's death - *This is a fine prefigurement of the (sadly ignored) pain of God.*

Jacob's love for Rachel is reflected and acknowledged by the inspired record when we read of *Rachel* weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted "because they are not" (Mt. 2:18; Jer. 31:15). But these ideas are more relevant surely to *Jacob* weeping for Rachel and especially for Joseph- for Jacob wept for Joseph and refused to be comforted (Gen. 37:35). This was after the death of Rachel (Gen. 35:19). Surely the record is reflecting the unity which there was between Jacob and Rachel; even after her death, Jacob wept as it were with her kind of weeping.

38:1 Judah was intended to be in the line of Messiah. And yet he married an unbeliever. It would seem that he married young, and he made his sons marry young likewise. Note that his sons are recorded as dying "in Canaan", before Judah left Canaan to emigrate to Egypt. This requires that the events of Gen. 38 occurred whilst Joseph was suffering in Egypt, and are typical of the sin of Israel / Judah in the Gentile world before their repentance and acceptance by Joseph / Jesus.

Went down from his brothers- He separated himself from God's people, associated with Gentiles and was led into sin. But the point of the story is that God still worked through him, because Tamar was directly in the line of Messiah. God's purposes were not stopped by human failure.

Turned in- Heb. 'to bend away', the language of apostasy.

38:2 *Saw... took... went in to her*- The language of David's sin with Bathsheba; note the use of messengers to try to get themselves out of the consequences of their action.

38:5 *Chezib*- Meaning 'falsehood'. Why else mention the place?

38:9 *Spilled it on the ground*- The sin was not masturbation as such, as has wrongly been supposed, but not loving his brother and being selfish. The same Hebrew phrase is used repeatedly of how the world's population in Noah's time *corrupted God's way in the earth*, and how God in appropriate response *destroyed the earth* (Gen. 6:11,12,13,17). There is therefore the implication that Judah wasn't interested in raising up a seed for God, but rather just wanted his own seed on the terms he wished. The phrase is repeatedly used in the prophets for how the earth / land of Judah was to be 'destroyed'. Judah were destroyed because like the historical Judah, they didn't want to raise a Godly seed.

38:10 *Displeased*- Heb. 'was evil in the eyes of'. In the darkness of a tent or inner room, God's eyes noticed every detail.

38:12 *His friend Hirah*- One wonders if Judah was in an illicit homosexual relationship with this man. The word is also translated "lover".

38:24 *Let her be burnt*- This may not necessarily mean to be burnt to death, but rather to be branded in the cheek or forehead so that she would be stigmatized as a prostitute. We note the obvious hypocrisy in Judah- it's a classic. He transferred his own guilt onto another.

Judah didn't give Shelah to Tamar because he clearly feared that he would lose his son, just as he had lost two other sons and his daughter by Tamar. He was concerned about preserving his own inheritance, and assumed that Tamar was somehow cursed by God and would be the source of death rather than the continuation of his line. Whereas God worked through that woman, by utter grace, to ensure that Judah would have children through Tamar who would be in the line of Messiah. God works through human sin, in order to show His grace, as it comes to a climax in Jesus.

38:25 *See, are these your signet and bracelets?* - Just as Judah had said to his father, "See, is this your son's coat" (Gen. 37:32); so it was now said to him, in order to try to bring him to repentance for what he had done to Joseph and Jacob. We see similar repetition of circumstance in the brothers' encounters with Joseph- to try to lead them to repentance.

"Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured" (39:6) clearly means he was good-looking (like his mother, grandmother and great-grandmother). The record seems to stress that the family was good looking. Perhaps this gives another angle on an old chestnut: Was Christ good looking and handsome as the Son of God, or weak and ugly as the suffering servant? On the cross, " his visage was so marred more than any man...there is no beauty that we should desire him...despised...we hid as it were our faces from him" (Is. 52:14; 53:2-4). Yet Joseph was strong and good looking, pleasing in the eyes of men (and women). So may we suggest that Christ too was naturally strong and attractive,

but he lost this due to the mental trauma of his life, resulting in his repulsive physical appearance as he hung on the cross.

39:13 Joseph lost his garment before he went into the pit and before he went to prison (39:13)- *Jn. 19:23.*

39:19 Joseph was being encouraged to see that the butler and baker were in a similar position to himself. They too had been thrown into prison and suffered the wrath of their lord for no reason (40:1,2); both Potiphar and Pharaoh are called 'Lord' (Gen. 39:16; 40:1). They too were given dreams which came true, and one of them was exalted as promised in his dream- to encourage Joseph that his dreams would likewise ultimately come true.

40:7 The sensitive reader will perceive that Joseph had a strong fatherly image, even from a young age (40:7; 41:43 mg.; 45:8). The Lord Jesus likewise; hence He referred to the disciples as His children when they were in the same peer group. This is understandable in that He is the supreme manifestation of *the* sovereign Father.

40:8 Joseph is so sure dreams come true- and he likewise must have lived in faith that his would too. He would therefore have been looking for the day when his brothers came to him and knelt before him.

40:15 The shame of Joseph in the dungeon (40:15); the lowest of the low, according to Ex. 12:29- *A type of the supreme degradation of Christ on the cross.*

Indeed I was stolen- Joseph wasn't stolen, he was sold by his brothers; but he had so often generously told the story that way that he spoke of it as "indeed" true. Just as his brothers repeated the lie about Joseph being dead to the point that they believed it.

40:23 Joseph was "forgotten" in prison, just as Judah later felt the same. Joseph therefore did this to him, knowing his brothers would leave Judah in prison feeling 'forgotten', so that Judah would enter into his sufferings. Our trials likewise are lovingly orchestrated so that we might identify with the sufferings of Christ.

41:14 " They made him run hastily out of the dungeon...and changed his raiment" (41:14 mg.)- *The energy of Christ's resurrection; change of clothing = change of nature, Zech. 3:3,4.*

41:42 Joseph had been given a special robe by Jacob which he lost; the garment Potiphar gave him was likewise grabbed from him by Potiphar's wife; so he must have thought 'how long will this one last?'. And his previous experiences were so that he would now not feel proud about having this robe of honour from Pharaoh.

41:43 *Bow the knee-* Joseph's faith in his dreams would've helped him not to be proud. He knew this wasn't the fulfilment of his dream. But he would've realized that if his brothers came to Egypt, they too would have to bow the knee to him, and thus fulfil his dreams. So he would've been on the lookout for them coming to him.

41:45 Given a new name: " Zaphnath-paaneah" : 'Saviour of the world', or 'bread of life'. *Christ given a new name on ascension (Phil. 2:6-9; Rev. 3:12).*

Joseph's wife had to forget all about her pagan past (41:45 = Ps. 45:10 = Dt. 21:13), especially her father's house. Joseph alluded to what she had gone through when he spoke of how he too had forgotten all his past suffering and his father's house (41:51). What a pair they were! Both had broken free of their pasts and were dedicated to the new life together. As such they typify the relationship between Christ and His bride.

41:48 Bread laid up in preparation for the famine- *Laying up the word as a foundation against the judgment (1 Tim. 6:19).*

41:49 *Gathered corn*- He realized it was his sheaf standing up, and so he expected his brothers to come and bow down to it for the sake of corn.

41:51 Joseph's (half-Gentile) sons were counted as the twelve tribes of Jacob (41:51)- *We are Christ's sons (Heb. 2:13). Joseph was called " tender father" (41:43 mg.) as Christ will be called 'Father' in the future age (Is. 9:6 Heb.)*

He forgot the pain of it all but clearly remembered what had happened. His apparent hardness to the brothers was therefore not from any motive of revenge.

41:52 *Land of my affliction*- Life without his brothers was an affliction, and the soft life was only affliction without that relationship.

42:1 Their silence was because of their unspoken suspicion that Joseph was alive in Egypt and they must meet him and maybe bow down to him as he had once predicted.

42:9,11 The false accusations were made to elicit from them the statement that they were "true men"- and as soon as the words were off their lips, they would have realized that in another context, they were not true men at all. This is why God allows false accusation- to elicit from us an awareness of where in fact we are really and truly at fault.

42:14 *That is it*- They had lied about Joseph by saying "one is not". Joseph therefore repeated his claim that they were lying- over years of faith in the fulfilment of his dreams, Joseph had carefully planned all this.

42:17 *Put them*- As they had cast Joseph into the pit (Gen. 37:22) and as he had been cast into prison because of false accusation (Gen. 39:20). The three days in prison perhaps recalled Joseph being three days in the pit- although such a time period isn't stated in the record, we can maybe infer he was there for three days because he is such a clear type of Jesus in the grave for three days. He did all this so that they could enter into His sufferings.

The brothers suffer in prison for three days to prod their conscience about Joseph (42:17)- *Three year tribulation of Israel in the last days to bring them to accept Christ?* We get the impression that Joseph changed his plans for them several times; he recalled them when already on their journey etc. - *Does this show that he hastened the day of revelation to them from purely emotional considerations- and will the Lord do the same with His Israel?*

42:19 Joseph changed the conditions- instead of all the brothers going to prison, only one of them would (cp. :16). He wanted to develop within them appreciation of the idea of one brother suffering for and in the place of his brothers- to prepare them to realize what had been achieved through Joseph's sufferings.

42:21 " The anguish of his soul" and pleas for deliverance (42:21), ignored by the brothers. " *The travail of his soul*" (Is. 53:12), ignored by Israel (Is. 53:1-4).

42:24 Joseph wept (this is recorded seven times in the record) (42:24). He must have found it hard to prolong the agony of not revealing himself to them immediately; he was motivated by a desire to make them see the enormity of their sin, for their spiritual good rather than his own vindication- *Joseph as a type of Christ makes his story prophetic. This is a stunningly deep prophecy of the intensity of Christ's feelings, as the mighty Son of God, towards wayward Israel in the last days. He was a man of sorrow in his mortal life, and will still have an element of this characteristic in the future.*

42:36 *Bereaved*- This implies Jacob knew they had killed Joseph. There is a theme in the records of unspoken knowledge; in 42:1 the brothers fear to go to Egypt because of their unspoken suspicion they might meet Joseph there.

42:51 *God* (this is important) made Joseph forget all his " toil" , his mental sufferings (42:51). This was a miracle; no amount of steel-willed suppression of his past could have made Joseph paper over all the pain. But God did a psychological miracle upon him. Has God done the same to Christ now in His glory, as He will to us one day soon (Rev. 21:4)? Yet Christ will be factually aware of His sacrifice and the associated pain. God presumably did not obliterate Joseph's memory cells, but He made him " forget" the pain. This is surely what God has done to Christ, and what He will do to us: take away the pain on a psychological level whilst still leaving a factual awareness. Is it too much to suggest that even now, God is ready and willing to do something like this?

43:10 The brothers delay in their return, doubtless because of the struggle with their conscience; never spoken of together, but operating on each man individually (43:10)- *Will there be a 'delay' in Israel's repentance, and therefore in the full manifestation of Christ? Every Jew in the last days will go through the silent struggle of conscience about Christ.*

43:14 God Almighty. Jacob's perception of God was as very powerful, One who can give undeserved grace to men like Jacob's sinful sons. He uses a term he has not previously used: *El-Shaddai*, the Almighty El. Using new terms for God reveals a deepening of understanding of Him. We likewise will grow in our knowledge of Him through the trials of life.

43:14 In 35:11 God encourages Jacob, fearful he would lose all his family to attacks from neighbouring tribes, to "be fruitful and multiply; a nation...*shall* be of thee, and kings *shall* come out of thy loins". If he played his part, the promises would be fulfilled. But at the time it seems Jacob wanted to cut and run, forgetting about having any more children. " If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" (43:14) sounds more like depressive fatalism than firm faith in the promises that his seed would eternally fill the earth.

Joseph celebrates their repentance with a meal together, at which they sit in their proper places (43:16)- *The marriage supper of the lamb, with each in his proper place (Lk. 14:10; 22:30; Rev. 19:9)*

43:16 "Slay and make ready" (43:16) for the meal. *This is the basis of the prodigal son parable (45:14,15 = Lk. 15:20); father = Christ; prodigal = repentant Jews, wanting to be servants and nothing else.*

43:21 *Full weight*- The whole experience succeeded in eliciting hyper honesty from the brothers, which is what Joseph intended. If they loved their brother [Simeon], they would return soon. The experience was to teach them to love their brother, a characteristic lacking in them.

43:31 *Refrained himself*- Both God and the Lord Jesus only delay, so that they might be the more gracious (Is. 30:18).

43:32 Joseph was showing that that he was not an Egyptian, but he was also somehow separate from them his brethren.

43:34 The desperate desire of Joseph for them to relax with him and accept his forgiveness led him to make them drunk so as to ease their relationship (43:34 AVmg.). This otherwise unethical act reveals the earnestness of his desire for them to be relaxed with him and open themselves to him. The Lord will have the same basic desire with us at the judgment.

44:4 They would naturally feel 'But we didn't reward this man evil for good'. Indeed they had not, in the immediate context. But they had done evil to Joseph (50:15,17,20 "You meant it for evil"). The purpose of false accusations is to provoke self examination and perhaps to reveal to us that in other contexts, those accusations against us are true in their essence.

44:13 The repetition of circumstance in our lives is not only to teach us, but to make sure that we learnt the lesson- for what teacher doesn't give pupils exercises to practice the theory they've learnt? It seems that Joseph, acting on God's behalf and as a type of Christ, manipulated circumstances so that his brothers would have *deja vu* experiences. Thus he sets things up to tempt them with freedom if they again betray their younger brother (Benjamin) and are thoughtless to their father's pain. The united, frank and open response of the brothers (Gen. 44:13,16,17) showed how they had indeed learnt their lesson.

44:15 *What deed did you do*- This was to elicit their memory of the deed done to Joseph.

I can divine- The idea was 'I know that you have committed a great, evil deed'- concerning Joseph.

44:16 Judah doesn't plead innocent about stealing the cup, but agrees that Joseph has rightly perceived that they have a great hidden sin. Judah speak of them as "servants" in the plural who have sinned, rather than in the singular, which he would've done if he only had Benjamin's behaviour in view.

45:1 "Then Joseph could not refrain himself..." (45:1) implies he planned to drag out the process of spiritually refining his brothers, but his love for them caused him to cut it short- "*For the elects sake the days shall be shortened*" by Christ (Mt. 24:22). *The same Hebrew word is used in Is. 42:14 about how God can no longer refrain Himself in the last days.*

Joseph as a type of Christ means that his brothers also have significance. The brethren meeting Joseph at the end has many echoes of the judgment seat of Christ. The whole purpose of the painful process which led up to that meeting was for the benefit of the brethren, to make them realize the enormity of their sin and the greatness of Joseph's grace. Likewise the judgment is for our benefit; the outcome is known to God beforehand. Does the (emphasized) emotionalism of Joseph at this time indicate anything about Christ's attitude then? "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves?" strikes a chord with Dan. 10:17, where even righteous Daniel in his figurative judgment finds it hard to speak. Our awareness of our sinfulness will doubtless have a like effect upon us. The moral desperation of the brethren ("how shall we clear ourselves?") will then be seen in us. Speechlessness is a characteristic of the rejected (Mt. 22:12); the brothers slunk away from Joseph's physical presence (45:4), as the rejected will (1 Jn. 2:28 Gk.). This all suggests that those accepted at the judgment seat will go through all the emotions of the rejected; they will realize that rejection is what they deserve. Those who judge (condemn) themselves now in their self-examination will not be condemned then.

45:6 *Still five years*- Again we see Joseph's firm faith that dreams come true.

45:7 "A great deliverance" (45:7)- *Heb. 2:3 "that great salvation"*. Israel saved, all the surrounding world also blessed with deliverance from the famine- *Ditto for the last days; the nations around Israel blessed materially to overcome the problems of the latter day judgments. These judgments are to make Israel repent, but in that time of trouble the whole world suffers.*

45:8 *Lord of all Pharaoh's house*- Joseph's experience of something similar in Potiphar's "house" and the prison house meant that he wouldn't have become proud because of it, and would've experienced it all thinking 'And this too, knowing my life, will likely soon come to an end. Worldly advantage comes and goes...!'

45:20 The news that Joseph was alive and glorified was received rather like that of Christ's resurrection: initial disbelief, but then the family of Jacob who believed it rose up and left all they had to go to be with Joseph; Israel in AD70 and the last days are likewise bidden leave their stuff and go to be with Christ (45:20 cp. Lk. 17:31). The brethren went forth on this journey with the admonition not to fall out with each other by the way (45:24). The wonder that was ahead of them should have made petty differences disappear.

46:2,3 Jacob's nervousness of going down into Egypt was doubtless due to his recollection of Abraham and Isaac's tales of spiritual woe concerning it. God appeared to Jacob concerning this, with the words: "Jacob, Jacob...fear not to go down into Egypt" (46:2,3). The double repetition of a name is usually a rebuke; but for what? Possibly for still being influenced in his spirituality by the spectre of his forefathers, rather than personally reflecting on the implications of God's word to Abraham, that his seed would have to live in a Gentile land for a period before they could be led into the promised land (15:13).

46:3- see on 31:54

At the end, Jacob as it were had come to repentance. Joseph falls on his neck and weeps for him (46:29), just as the Father does to the repentant prodigal.

There are many *echoes* of Christ which seem to have no specific purpose apart from to confirm us in our enthusiasm to constantly see the spirit of Christ in this record (e.g. 46:30 = Lk. 2:29,30).

It may be that Jacob considered Joseph to be the special Messianic seed (which he was, in type), and this would explain his profound joy on seeing Joseph alive *and his children*, for this would have meant that the promises concerning the seed, as he understood them, had been proved true (46:30; 48:11). See on Heb. 11:21

At the close of his life, Jacob was still emotionally attached, consciously and unconsciously, to his father and grandfather (consider the way he unconsciously imitates his father by feeling he is about to die years before he does, 47:9 cp. 28 cp. 27:2 cp. 35:28). But he had made their faith his own.

Jacob speaks of his life as a "pilgrimage" (47:9), using the same word used about Abraham and Isaac (17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1). Thus he showed his connection with them; they became *in spiritual not just emotional terms* the centre of his thinking. See on 49:31. Jacob speaking of how his life had been a "pilgrimage" (47:9) shows that he realized that this life was only a series of temporary abodes. The same word is translated "stranger" with reference to the patriarchs' separation from the tribes around them (17:8; 28:4; 36:7; 37:1). Jacob's attitude that the things of this life were only temporary, that we are only passing through, is identified in Heb. 11:10-16 as an indicator that Jacob shared the faith of Abraham and Isaac

At 130, Jacob seems to have felt that the fact he had not lived as long as his father and grandfather had, indicated that he had not received so much blessing as they had; he saw length of years *in this life* as being significant (47:9), rather than allowing the prospect of future eternity make present longevity fade into insignificance. And yet in his final 17 years, he grew quickly; he was not spiritually idle in those last 17 years of retirement. For at the very end he could say that his blessings had exceeded "the blessings of my progenitors" (49:26).

47:29 The way Jacob recognizes the greatness of Christ at the end reflects a maturing of attitude since the day when he refused to accept that he would ever bow down to Joseph (37:10). The way he speaks to Joseph at the end shows his deeper respect of him: "If I have found grace in thy sight" (47:29) was the same way in which he had addressed Esau, when crawling before him in 33:8,10,15. His appreciation of the greatness of Joseph reflected his appreciation of the greatness of Christ.

48:3 God Almighty. Jacob's perception of the power of God, this one Almighty *El*, is growing. Ex. 6:3 says that Yahweh appeared to Jacob "by the name of God Almighty", so presumably this Name was declared to Jacob at the vision in Bethel; for this, Jacob says, was when God primarily "appeared" to him. And yet he is only recorded as using this name 50 years later. It took 50 years for the fact that God really is ALL mighty to sink in, and for him to come out with this publicly.

Jacob's *personal* grasp of the wonder of the promises at the end is revealed in 48:4, where Jacob recounts how "God Almighty...said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession". God never actually said all this to Jacob; Jacob is quoting the promise to Abraham of Gen. 17:8 *and applying it to himself*. And with us too, a

personal grasp of the wonder of it all, that it really applies to *me*, is a mark of that final maturity we vain would achieve.

He seems to have perceived the spiritual danger his children were in, living in the luxury of Egypt. The promises of being fruitful and being given a land were being fulfilled, in a primary sense, in Israel's experience in Egypt (48:4 cp. 47:27). Joseph was *given* the *land* of Egypt (41:41), using the same words as in 45:18; 48:4 concerning how the true *land* -of Canaan- had been *given* to Abraham's children. Jacob's children were given a *possession* in Egypt (47:11), and therefore Jacob emphasized that their *real* possession was the eternal inheritance of Canaan, not Egypt (48:4; 49:30; 50:13). Thus Jacob at the end realized the importance of warning God's people against the world, against the temptation of feeling that God's present material blessing of us with a foretaste of His Kingdom means that in fact we lose our enthusiasm for the *true* Kingdom, in its real, material sense. Like Paul in his final flourish of 2 Tim., Jacob saw the need to warn God's people, to point them away from the world, and towards the future Kingdom. Jacob saw that his people, like him in his earlier life, would be tempted to see God's promises on an altogether too human and material level.

At the very end, Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons as the firstborn is seen as an act of faith (48:5; Heb. 11:21). Yet on another level, Jacob was taking the blessings away from the firstborn who was the son of the wife he disliked, and giving those blessings to the son of his favourite wife, who was not the firstborn. This was quite contrary to the will of God as expressed in Dt. 21:17. At best we can say that God allowed one principle to be broken to keep another (although what other?). At worst, Jacob was simply showing rank favouritism, and yet at the same time he foresaw in faith the Messianic suggestions in Joseph's experience, and therefore made Joseph's sons the firstborn. God saw the good in Jacob at this time, and counted this to him, and recognized and worked with Joseph's decision to make "the son of the hated" the firstborn (1 Chron. 5:1), even though this may have been contrary to God's highest intentions. Likewise God worked through Jacob's pagan use of poplar rods and mandrakes. The way Jacob insisted on blessing Ephraim as the firstborn again seems to show some kind of favouritism and a desire to see his grandson living out his own experience, i.e. the younger son who fought his way up and received the blessings as opposed to the rightful heir. Ephraim becomes a code-name for apostate Israel throughout the prophets. And yet God accepted Jacob's preferential blessing of Ephraim and repeated this in Dt. 33:17.

The weakness in Jacob's tendency to have an over-physical view of the promises was still with him at the end. He seems to speak as if he saw the fact that Rachel was buried in Canaan as a proof that therefore in that sense he had possessed the land of Canaan (48:7 and context). Yet the NT says that the fact Jacob *didn't* own the land meant that he hadn't received the fulfillment of the promises, but would do so in the future.

There was a unity, a mutuality, between Jacob and God at the end. No longer did he see God as someone else's God, not even just his father's God. The lessons of Jacob's name change were finally learnt. Thus he asks Joseph to bring his sons to him, so that he may bless them; but when he gives

the blessing, he states that this is God blessing them (48:8,9,15,16); he saw God working through him. See on 49:33

48:11- see on 49:8

Jacob's final appreciation of God's grace, the way he does far above what our works should deserve, is indicated by his comment that " I had not thought to see thy (Joseph's) face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed" (48:11). " Thought" is 74 times translated " pray" , and only once " thought" ; the idea is surely: 'I never prayed to see you again, I didn't therefore have the faith in the resurrection which I should have done, just as I didn't believe your mother could be resurrected when you spoke of her coming to bow before you (37:10); but God in His grace has done exceeding abundantly above all I asked or didn't ask for, and shewed me not only your face in this life, but also your children'.

At age 130, Jacob mumbled to Pharaoh: " Few and *evil* have the days of the years of my life been" , as if every day had dragged (47:9). But at the very end, 17 years later, he more positively speaks of the Angel that had redeemed him from all *evil* (48:15).

Jacob's reference to how Abraham and Isaac 'walked before' his God (48:15) is a reference back to 17:1; 24:40. Jacob had meditated upon these records, in whatever form they were preserved, and now bubbled out with reference to them. Those same promises concerning the Lord Jesus and his Kingdom should become the centre of our thought as we reach spiritual maturity. " Let my name be named upon them (Joseph's children), and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac" (48:16) indicates that he saw an equivalence between them and him; he saw they were " heirs of the same promise" (Heb. 11:9). Jacob came to realize that those promises made to them were the very basis of *his* faith too, as well as theirs, and he knew therefore that he would be resurrected with them into the glory of God's Kingdom. And so he wanted to be buried with them; he didn't reject them, but he came to understand that the promises were gloriously true for him on a personal level.

It is so easy to under-estimate the amount of work the Angels are doing in our lives; Jacob recognized that his Angel physically fed him all his days, and that it was not just at the crises in his life that the Angel had been present; he describes the Angel as "ever redeeming me" (Gen. 48:15,16), as if the whole process of life is one continual redeeming process by the Angel, as He designs trials for us which will perfect us in order to gain redemption, as well as physically redeeming us more times than we realize.

Almost on his deathbed, Jacob speaks of how the God of Abraham and Isaac is his God (48:15,16); he speaks of being gathered to his people, to them, just as they too had been gathered to their people (49:29 cp. 25:8; 35:29). He really stresses his desire to be buried in Canaan along with Abraham and Isaac (47:29,30; 49:29; 50:5,6), alongside his dad and grandfather, remembering how they had lived together in the same tents in his childhood (Heb. 11), speaking together of the promises. The fact he had prepared his grave there years before shows that this was not only the sentimental feeling of a dying man. This repeated emphasis on his connection with Abraham and Isaac shows that at the end, Jacob saw the supreme importance of being a member of God's people. He didn't just fix on his own personal hope, but on the fact he was connected with all the heirs of the promise. Paul also

focused on this aspect when he came to his time of departing. And so with us, we will come to see (if we haven't already) that our association with Christianity is not just a part of our social structure. We aren't just Christians because of parental expectation. Our association with God's people is eternal, the consequences of being baptized into the body of Christ (the believers) are related to our salvation. Thus the believers are joint-heirs together of the same Abrahamic promises (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 3:7), just as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived together as joint heirs of the same promises (Heb. 11:9).

Gen. 48:16 "the God" see on Ex. 23:27

At the end, Jacob spoke of God as his redeemer (48:16), which is the first Biblical reference to the concept of redemption. This was not the only area in which Jacob was a paradigm breaker (consider how he coined the word *abiyir* to describe God's mightiness). The Hebrew for "redeem" is taken from the idea of the nearest kinsman. Jacob at the end of his days is surely saying that now he saw God as closer than his family. We really have a lot to learn here. God comes before family- although increasingly this isn't appreciated by Anglo-Saxon believers. The new convert who sacrifices family ties for allegiance to Christ realizes this full well. But in my observation, second and third generation believers aren't so committed. The majority of the divisions and bitternesses which plague the brotherhood are largely a result of believers wanting to stay with their family, rather than follow Divine principles. Time and again brethren and sisters change fellowships, with all the disruption this causes, simply because of family, not for any genuine Biblical conviction. Effectively they will throw others out of fellowship, throw new converts into turmoil and disillusion, just to stick with a dogmatic family member, even though they may not share his or her convictions. And so God's Truth becomes a social and family affair rather than a candlestick burning with the fire of the Spirit. Christians tend to follow parental expectation and the norms of their social network rather than God's word.

Although Jacob maybe favoured Judah on a human level, he certainly favoured Joseph spiritually. It seems that he made up his mind that Messiah would come from Joseph (when in fact Christ came through Judah). He said that Ephraim's seed would become a multitude of nations (48:19)- he was applying the Messianic promise to Ephraim. Likewise he stated that from Joseph (Ephraim's father) would come the Shepherd / Stone / Messiah (49:24); presumably, Jacob thought, through Ephraim. Yet Jacob was wrong in this. Thus whilst Jacob showed his spiritual maturity by an enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus Christ, even right at the very end of his life, he still had an old flaw: a desire to fulfill God's promises in the way *he* wanted them fulfilled, a desire to turn God's word round to fit in with *his* preferred way of thinking (in this case, that Messiah would come through Joseph / Ephraim). The way the prophets continually describe sinful Israel as "Ephraim" is perhaps God's way of showing that Jacob's way was not His way.

Jacob's all too physical view of the promises is perhaps also suggested in his desire to make Yahweh his God because He had fed him all his life long (48:20). Earlier he had promised to do this, if Yahweh would indeed provide him with daily food (28:20). That bargain he struck with God would surely have been best repented of rather than carried through.

" (Shechem), which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with *my* sword and with *my* bow" (48:22) indicates that Jacob's old self-reliance was still not totally gone; his sense that through his own effort he could bring about the fulfillment of God's promises for him. In this area, the weakness of Jacob remained. These very words are alluded to in Josh. 24:12 and Ps. 44:1-6, where the Spirit says that the land was given to Israel *not* on account of their bow and sword.

Several times at the very end (Gen. 49:2,7,24) Jacob mentions his old and new names ('Jacob' and 'Israel') together, as if to show that now he finally accepted and believed the wondrous change that God had wrought in him. First of all, he doesn't seem to have accepted his name change, and needed God to remind him of it again (32:28; 35:10). To accept, really accept, the Name we called upon ourselves at baptism (Acts 2:21; 9:14; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-14) is difficult. To believe that God really does see us as His people, bearing His Name, with all the moral glory this implies... it took Jacob no less than 50 years to realize the implications of Jacob's name change (Jacob's name was changed when he was 97, and he only uses it freely of himself just before his death at 147). It's unusual for a man to repeatedly mention his own name when talking to others; and yet this is exactly what Jacob did in 48:20; 49:2,7,24; it was as if he was playing with a new toy, reflecting his grasp of that basic, wondrous truth he had been taught 50 years ago; that in *God's* eyes, his name had changed. In God's eyes, he was not the Jacob, the liar, the supplanter, the deceiver; but Israel, the prince with God. But it took 50 years for the wonder of it all to come home to him.

The way Jacob rebukes and effectively rejects Reuben, Simeon and Levi, the sons who had flaunted their natural strength and prowess, reflects the perspectives which Jacob attained at the end. " Reuben...my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power...thou shalt not excel" (49:3,4) sounds as if Jacob associated his natural strength with Reuben, and yet now he rejected it. Doubtless these men gathered round their father expecting to hear some sweet fatherly blessing mixed with a few gentle reproofs for past behaviour. The whole process of Israel's sons being " gathered" to him and receiving their blessing and judgment is typical of the final judgment, showing how Jacob was a type of Christ at this time. The surprise of the sons we are left to imagine, but it would point forward quite accurately to the surprise which will be a feature of the rejected (Mt. 25:44).

The evident problem the Abraham family had with women s emphasized in the record. One man, one woman was the declared standard of God at this time. Adam, Noah, Noah's sons, Aaron, Moses were all one man: one woman cases. The patriarchs having more than one wife at a time sticks out like a sore thumb. Abraham's apparently casual relationship with Hagar, Judah's use of a harlot (apparently the sort of thing he often did), Esau's many carnal wives, Dinah's love affair, Reuben's incest (49:4)...all this creates a certain impression of weakness in this area. Joseph's evil report regarding his brothers may well have featured news of their playboy escapades while far away from usual family life (37:2 = 1 Sam.2:23,24). The repeated way in which they lied about their wives also indicates that they didn't take their marital responsibilities as they should have (12:13; 20:3,13; 26:7).

Although Jacob's seed had become a " multitude" as promised, he says that he refuses to unite himself with the " assembly" (s.w. multitude) of Simeon and Levi (49:6), as if he saw this physical fulfilment of the promises in his lifetime as worthy little. His appreciation of the promises absolutely fills his thinking at the end. The promised Kingdom was " the pride of

Jacob" (Ps. 47:4 NIV; Am. 6:8; Nah. 2:2), his chiefest joy. There are aspects of Jacob's blessings of his sons which evidently have not been fulfilled. Presumably they will be fulfilled in the Kingdom, which shows how Jacob's mind was not dwelling on his children receiving physical blessings from God in the short term (cp. how Isaac blessed his sons), but rather the promised eternal blessings of the Kingdom. It is quite likely that the sons, in their humanity, expected blessings of a more immediate sort, such as a dying father of those times would have shared out between his sons. But instead, Jacob's talk is not of the things of this brief life, but of the Kingdom.

Jacob's reflection on Joseph's sufferings gave him a clearer picture of those of the future Messiah. Jacob foresaw how Simeon and Levi would be especially responsible for 'houghing the ox' (49:6 RV), or bullock (Concordant Version), i.e. Christ (Dt. 33:17 RV), the bullock of the sin offering (Heb. 13:11-13). Gen. 49:6 can also be rendered, with evident Messianic reference, 'murdering the prince' (49:6 Adam Clarke's Translation). The Roman historian Hippolytus says that " From Simeon came the Scribes, and from Levi the priests" ; it was these groups who murdered the Lord, and Jacob seems to have foreseen this, through his reflection on their hatred of Joseph. He comments that they took counsel against Joseph, as the scribes and priests would do against Christ (Ps. 2:2).

49:8- see on 37:10

Finally, Jacob accepted Joseph as a type of Christ. And yet it would seem that he favoured Judah with an unseemly favouritism. His comment that " thy father's children shall bow down before thee" (49:8) seems a conscious allusion to Joseph's dream that Jacob's children would bow to *him*; as Jacob refused to accept it then, so he had problems with it even at the end (37:10). " I had not thought to see thy face" (48:11) suggests that he had discounted the possibility of Joseph's dream ever coming true.

Jacob twice describes his Messianic descendant as devouring the prey in the morning of the second coming (49:9, 27); he foresaw an aggressive tension between Messiah and other beasts, i.e. the nations of the surrounding world, which would end in the glorious victory of Christ's coming in glory. This image of devouring the prey after the battle against the world in this life is the basis of other latter day prophecies (Ez. 39:18-20; Rev. 19:17-20). The faithful will eat the carcass of the beast at Christ's coming (Mt. 24:28 cp. Rev. 19:17-20), sharing in the victory of the lion of Judah who has slain his prey and now devours it. This was all foreseen by Jacob, although he would have seen the beasts which the Messiah / lion devoured as the nations surrounding his people (Jer. 15:3; 28:14; Ez. 5:17 and many others).

He saw Messiah as being associated with the ass (49:11), the Hebrew for which essentially means 'patience'; he foresaw the Lord's patient endurance in the struggle, and even foresaw his garments as dipped in blood (49:11 cp. Rev. 14:18), eyes bloodshot with the struggle, and yet with teeth white as milk from a true assimilation of God's teaching (49:12 cp. Is. 55:1); through his personal experience and extensive reflection on the basic need of man and the promised blessing of

forgiveness, Jacob really went deeply and accurately into a personal knowledge of Christ. Blind as he was (48:10), Jacob meditated upon the Lord Jesus. His mind was filled with him. He perhaps contrasted his own dim eyes with the burning, bloodshot eyes of his zealous Lord, visualizing the suffering which he knew He would endure for his sake. The blessings of Gen. 49 are in well planned poetic form; it may be that Jacob composed these poems about the Lord Jesus as the crystallization of his extended reflection on the Lord. Would that we would rise up to the Messianic perception of the blind poet Jacob. Likewise David foresaw the Lord Jesus always before his face, and therefore his heart was never ruffled. Jacob evidently saw in Joseph's experience a type of Christ's future sufferings and resurrection (49:11,23).

His border shall be unto Zidon" (49:13) is an unreconciled expositional problem. The canton of Zebulun in the Millennium will be nowhere near Zidon, and Zebulun didn't have a border unto Zidon in the past. According to Josephus (Ant. 19:10,16), Zebulun was never even bounded by the sea, being cut off by Asher. Could it be that at times Jacob's enthusiasm carried him away, and what he said was more his own wishing than the direct revelation of God? Until a satisfactory explanation can be come up with, it seems this is what we must accept. In this case, we see that even in this flurry of faith in the future Kingdom and Messiah, Jacob's interest in the physical aspect of the promises still remained with him, and carried him away in a way which God refused to work with. David's spiritual enthusiasm for Solomon needs to be read in a similar light; he makes statements concerning him which reflect a Messianic zeal, but also a desire to see his physical son more blessed than he was worthy of. This comment that Zebulun would dwell at the haven of the sea (49:13) was not fulfilled in this dispensation, seeing that according to Josephus (and a careful reconstruction of Joshua's words), Zebulun never dwelt by the Sea, being cut off from the coast by the tribe of Asher. And yet according to the distribution of the tribal cantons recorded in Ezekiel, Zebulun will border the Red Sea in the Millennium (Ez. 48:26). And Jacob foresaw this, and gave Zebulun that blessing, with not a mention of any more immediate blessing. He had come to learn that in essence, the promised blessings of God were of the future, not the here and now.

" Issachar has desired that which is good; (i.e.) resting between the inheritance. And having seen the resting place that it was good...he subjected his shoulder to labour" (49:14 LXX). The Apostle alludes to this Greek text in Heb. 4:1: " Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest" . Jacob imputed righteousness to his son Issachar at the end. Imputing righteousness to others, seeing the good and the potential in them, was something Jacob only reached at the end; he saw Issachar as seeing the future Kingdom, and devoting himself to labour now to attain that future rest. And the writer to the Hebrews bids us follow that man's example. Jacob's judgment of his Issachar was with regard to how keenly he perceived the future rest of the Kingdom, and laboured now to attain it. For this reason, Jacob commended him; he judged Issachar according to how keenly he desired the Kingdom.

Jacob's achievement of a true humility is evident in his last words. The way he blessed his sons in Gen. 49 indicates this; note how he saw Issachar's greatness in the fact he was a humble servant

(49:14). He learnt the lesson of that night of wrestling; his natural strength was not to be gloried in, neither was this to be his true greatness.

Dan was to bite the horse heels, so that the riders fell backwards (49:17). This is to be connected with Zech. 10:5, which speaks of how in the last days, the Arab invaders of Israel will be toppled from their horses by the men of Israel / Jacob. Again, Jacob's mind was on the far distant glory of his sons in the day of the Kingdom. There is also reference here to Gen. 3:15, but with an unexpected twist; Dan as the snake (not the woman) would bite his enemies, and thereby subdue them. Is there a hint here that Jacob had so meditated on the Lord Jesus, the future Messiah, that he realized that he must have our sinful, snake-like, Jacob-like nature, and yet through that very fact the final victory against sin would be won? 'Jacob' meaning 'heel-catcher' associates him with the seed of the snake, who would bruise the seed of the woman in the heel. He saw how he would somehow be rescued from his own 'Jacob-ness', saved from himself, by the Saviour to come. It turned out that Jacob, who in some ways was the seed of the snake, became the seed of the woman. And yet his Messianic blessing of Dan indicates that he saw these two aspects in his Saviour Lord; he was the one who had the appearance of the seed of the snake (cp. how the bronze snake symbolized him), and yet was in fact the seed of the woman. I really believe that Jacob had so deeply reflected on his own life and sinfulness, on the promise in Eden, and on the promises of Abraham's saviour-seed, that he came to as fine an appreciation of the representative nature of Christ's sacrifice as any believer has today. Thus a lifetime of reflection on the promises (rather than thinking 'Yes, we know all about them') and sustained self-examination will lead to a deep grasp of the fact that Christ really represented *you*, he had exactly your nature, and thereby he is your very own saviour. And yet the fact Christ was our representative seems to be written off by many of us as a dead piece of doctrine we must learn before baptism.

Jacob's hope of Messiah was the hope of his life; " I have waited for thy salvation" , 'Your Jesus', he commented (49:18). " I have waited for thy salvation (Jesus)" (49:18) is commented upon by the Jerusalem Targum with the suggestion that Jacob was expressing a very definite Messianic expectation: " My soul waiteth not for the deliverance of Gideon, the son of Joash, for it was only temporal; nor for that of Samson, for it was but transient; but for the redemption by the Messiah, the Son of David, which in thy word thou hast promised to send to thy people, the children of Israel; for this, thy salvation, my soul waiteth"

49:18 LORD [Yahweh]. Yahweh is a saviour God, not just a provider of children, cattle and land for the present; and now, at long last, Jacob associates Yahweh with himself; Yahweh has become his God, as he promised 70 years before. Ex. 6:3 says that Jacob knew the Yahweh Name from the time God appeared to him; but it took him a lifetime to make Yahweh his very own God.

Gad " shall overcome *at the last*" (49:19) reflects how Jacob's mind was focused on the final victory of his people, " at the last" .

At the end of his life, Jacob had come to terms with his earlier idolatry. 'Gad' was the name of a Babylonish deity which presided over chance; Israel were condemned for believing in him in Is. 65:11

AVmg. Leah using this name reflected the sentiment of 'Good fortune at the hand of the god Gad'. The way she effectively accuses Jacob's God of treating her like a prostitute who gave her "hire" because she let her maid sleep with her husband...doesn't indicate that she was a great believer in Yahweh. Yet when Jacob blessed Gad in 49:19, he seems to change this: "Gad, a troop (Heb. *gedud*, not *gad*) shall overcome (*guwd*, related to *gad*) him: but he shall overcome". These word plays would suggest that the god Gad would be overcome, would be 'Gad-ed', by the troop of warriors that would come from the tribe of Gad.

49:20 **Asher** "shall yield royal dainties", or 'dainties fit for a king' suggests Jacob imagining how in the Kingdom, the Lord Jesus would eat food grown in Asher? The tribes of Israel will each bring their royal dainties to the Lord Jesus in the Millennium (Ez. 45:16).

Naphtali "is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly (lit. 'gracious') words" (49:21) is another Messianic hint; Ps. 22 (title) likens the Lord to a hind at the time of his death; and again, Jacob's appreciation of the quality of grace as it would be manifested in Christ comes out. The LXX says that Naphtali is "a tree trunk let loose". With all the other Messianic insights in Jacob's words, this cannot be accidental. Jacob even saw something of the physical manner of the Lord's death. The idea of being let loose has day of atonement connections (Lev. 16:21). Did Jacob see that far ahead? One Chaldee text reads for this verse: "Naphtali is a swift messenger like a hind that runneth on the tops of the mountains bringing glad tidings".

49:23,26- The purpose of it all was so that the brothers would tell the truth and confess to Jacob what they had done to his son; now Jacob knew what they had done.

Gen. 49:23,24 speaks of Angelic strengthening of Jesus: "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him (a prophecy of the Lord's sufferings): but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee. . ". There are similarities here with Moses' hands being held up by Aaron and Hur until Amalek was destroyed- an exhausted man with both hands upheld above his head until the great enemy of God's people (cp. sin) was destroyed must recall the suffering of Christ on the cross. The many Angelic titles in these verses ("God of Jacob. . of thy fathers") are made all the more relevant by being mentioned in the context of Gen. 48:15,16, which is the clearest association of them with the Angel. Thus it was through the Angels that Christ was strengthened on the cross.

Gen. 49:24 describes "the mighty God of Jacob" (an Angelic phrase) as the shepherd and rock of Israel. The references in Deuteronomy to God being the rock that Israel forsook therefore refer to the Angel (Dt. 32:15,18). It is worth noting that the shepherd and rock ("stone" of Gen. 49:24) are both clear titles of Christ- implying that this Angel specifically represented Jesus? Hence "that rock (Angel) was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4).

Jacob describes Christ as "the stone of Jacob / Israel" (49:24); Jacob's physical stone had been overturned, rested upon, set up and anointed (28:13-15); perhaps now at the end, Jacob thought back to that incident and saw in that stone a prophecy of the death and resurrection of the Lord. Perhaps he even saw that the anointing, the 'Christ-ing' of the Stone would be after

its raising up; he foresaw that the Lord Jesus would be made the Christ, the anointed, in the fullest sense by the resurrection (Acts 2:36). "The hope of Israel", or (see modern versions), "he for whom Israel / Jacob hopes" is another title of Christ (Acts 28:20 cp. Jer. 14:8; 17:13; Joel 3:16); he was the one for whom Jacob / Israel hoped. And his hope is the hallmark of all the Israel of God.

Jacob's reflection on the Lord Jesus must have been deep indeed, for he reaches some quite advanced and deep conclusions concerning him. Thus he describes God as the God from whom is "the shepherd, the stone of Israel / Jacob" (49:24), both evidently Messianic titles. Yet "the rock of Israel" is later understood to be a reference to the God of Jacob (2 Sam. 23:3). Therefore we may conclude that Jacob saw his God as manifest in the future Messiah, who would come out of the Father, i.e. be the Son of God. To understand God manifestation in Christ and the necessity for his Divine Sonship could have come from direct Divine revelation, but my sense is that it came instead from his deep appreciation of the promised blessing of forgiveness through Abraham's Messianic seed. Jacob's ever deepening appreciation of this and his progressive appreciation of God's grace led him to deeply meditate on the Lord's role. Jacob himself was a shepherd (46:34; Hos. 12:12), and yet he gave Christ the title of "the shepherd" (49:24), as if he recognized that although Christ would come out of God, he would also be exactly like Jacob, of his nature. He saw on a completely personal level the way in which Christ truly was his very very own representative. He therefore saw in himself a type of Christ, indicated by the way in which he asks his sons to gather themselves unto him, and then goes on to say that ultimately, his people will gather themselves together unto Messiah (49:1,2 cp. 10).

49:24- see on 1 Cor. 10:4; Gen. 48:19

49:24,25 Mighty God. *Finally*, at long last, Jacob got there. He says three times the same thing; God is my God, Yahweh- Messiah will be the my rock, my stone, yes, He is the God of your father Jacob, He is ALL-MIGHTY to save. That promise made 70 years previously in semi-belief, he had now fulfilled. He had made Yahweh his God. He was not only the God of his father and grandfather. The God who can do all things, not only physically but more importantly (as Jacob now realized) *spiritually*, was with his very own God. No wonder he dies repeating this three times over. And remember, he's our pattern. Jacob coins a new name for God: the *abiyr*, translated here "the mighty [God]". This word occurs only in five other places, and each time it is in the phrase "the mighty one (*abiyr*) of Jacob" (Ps. 132:2,5; Is. 1:24; 49:26; 60:16). Likewise, the Lord used new titles of God in his time of ultimate spiritual maturity as he faced death (Jn. 17:11,25). Many of the Messianic Psalms refer to God as "my God", and it was one of the phrases in the Lord's mind in His final, glorious maturity (Mt. 27:46). Moses in his final speech of Deuteronomy often encouraged Israel that God was *thy* (singular, personal) God. Jacob knew God's mightiness for himself in a very special way; he knew His gentle forgiveness of all his pride and self-will, that mighty forgiveness, that mighty patience with him, that Almighty salvation of him which had been made possible. In the same way we will each be given the name of God, and yet this Name will be known only to us (Rev. 2:17; 3:12; 14:1); it will be God's Name, but in a form entirely personal to us. In dim foreshadowing of that glorious relationship with God, Jacob reached something of this even in his mortal life.

49:26- see on 47:9

Jacob's progression from perceiving the promises as concerning physical blessing to seeing their essential relevance to forgiveness and future salvation is made explicit by 49:26: "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of the ancient mountains, the delight, glory or loveliness of the hills of eternity" (this rendition is supported by the LXX, Gesenius, RVmg.). Remember that in the wrestling incident, Jacob realized that the blessing of God essentially refers to His forgiveness; and this connection between blessing and forgiveness / salvation is widespread throughout Scripture: Dt. 33:23; Ps. 5:12 (blessing = grace) Dt. 30:19; Ps. 3:8; 24:5; 28:9; 133:3 (= salvation); Ex. 12:32; 32:29; Num. 24:1; 2 Sam. 21:3; Ps. 67:1 (cp. context); Lk. 6:28 (cp.) Acts 3:26; Rom. 4:7,8; 1 Cor. 10:16; Gal. 3:14 (= forgiveness). Surrounded by his sons clamouring, one can imagine, for physical, immediate blessings, just as he did in the first half of his life, Jacob says that the spiritual blessings he had received, the grace, the forgiveness, the salvation, were infinitely higher than the blessings of rock-solid hills and mountains, things which seemed so permanent and tangible. His intangible blessings were, he finally realized, much higher than his intangible ones.

Jacob no longer saw the promised blessings as referring to him personally having a prosperous time in the promised land; he joyfully looked forward to the future Kingdom. He says that he now realizes that his blessings (of forgiveness and the subsequent hope of the Kingdom) are greater than the blessings of the everlasting mountains (49:26 RV mg.); he saw the spiritual side of his blessings as more significant than the material aspect. Despite the fact that the promises were primarily fulfilled in the peace and prosperity he and his seed enjoyed at the end (48:4 "multitude" s.w. 47:27; 35:11; 28:3), Jacob doesn't emphasize this fact as he could have done; instead, he looks to the future, ultimate fulfilments. He looked back on his life as a "pilgrimage", a series of temporary abodes on the way to something permanent, i.e. the future Kingdom (47:9).

"In the morning he shall devour the prey" (49:27) connects with the promises that Messiah's second coming would be the true morning (Is. 60:1; Mal. 4:1,2); this was the day when Benjamin would have his true blessing.

Many of Jacob's blessings of his sons contain some reference to Christ's future work, e.g. "he shall divide the spoil" (49:27); "he whom thy brethren shall praise" (49:8 = Rev. 5:5). Jacob describes Judah's Messianic descendant as "my son"; he eagerly looked ahead to the Lord Jesus as fulfilment of the promised Messianic seed. He perhaps saw that the multitudinous seed he had been promised was in fact an intensive plural, referring to the one great Messianic seed.

49:22 This speaks of the descendant of Joseph as a fruitful vine (N.I.V.), with branches. The Lord Jesus seems to have quarried his description of himself as a vine with branches from this very passage (Jn.15:5). Verse 23 continues: "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and (note this bit) the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; from thence is the shepherd, the stone (more Messianic allusions here) of Israel". The upholding of Moses' arms in Ex. 17:12 is being unmistakably prophesied here; in a Messianic prophecy.

In his penultimate sentence, Jacob makes the perhaps strange comment that "they buried Isaac" (his father; 49:31). The "they" meant him and Esau (35:29), but perhaps Jacob wanted to show his separation from Esau by describing the funeral in this way. Separation from the

world is thus an aspect of spiritual maturity, and also a result of sustained appreciation of the covenant promises.

It seems that Jacob came to see his beloved parents in spiritual, not emotional terms, at the end. Consider the pronouns he uses in almost his last words: " There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they (i.e. he and his brother, 35:29) buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah" (49:31). He doesn't talk about in the first person about " my father" or " I" buried. He sees himself as their friend in faith, more than their son. These words were said in Jacob's last breath. It shows to me how at last he had won this battle, he had shed the crutch of his father's faith, he stood alone before *his* God, at the very end he wasn't leaning on his parents spiritually any more, all the scaffolding had been removed, and he stood alone, on his own deep foundation. His final words are full of conscious and unconscious reference to the fathers and the promises. See on 47:9; 48:15

Jacob's final words reflect his resentment against the children of Heth (49:32); he saw that they were the world, the children of this world which now possess the land of promise, covenanted to be God's Kingdom, not theirs. He realized that the time was not yet ripe, and his very last words were a reminder of this: " The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth" (49:32). His mind was centred on the promises and the future ownership of the land, and on his connection with Abraham and Isaac; the fact that the land was not inherited during the patriarch's lifetimes (the land had to be bought from the children of Heth) is seen by the Spirit as an indication that the Kingdom had not yet come, but surely would do (Acts 7:5). And Jacob died with exactly the same perception. In doing so, he was reflecting the view of his dear mother, who detested the ways of the Godless children of Heth (27:46). So in his time of dying, Jacob was not divided from the spiritual views of his parents. Their Hope was his Hope, but he had made it his own. He was not just living out their expectations of him. The way he got there in the end is just marvellous to behold.

At the very end, Jacob gathered himself up into his bed to die, and then God gathered him up (this comes out very clearly in the Hebrew text; 49:33). That desire of God for mutuality with His servant Jacob had always been there. See on 48:8

50:17 cp. :18 *We are the servants of God... your servants*- They perceived Joseph as God manifest, hence his comment in :19 "Am I in the place of God?". Or it could be that Joseph is encouraging them that he is indeed in the place of God (he had been prepared for it by having all authority delegated to him by Potiphar and Pharaoh); and he could therefore assure them that his grace towards them was indeed a reflection of God's grace to them. And God to this day arranges things and encounters in our lives to elicit repentance from us, and to help us perceive that others' grace to us is indeed God's grace to us reflected through them.

" Fear not: for I am in the place of God" (50:19 Heb.); " thou art even as Pharaoh" (44:18)- *Joseph as a type of Christ reveals the revelation of God's essential love through the face of Jesus Christ.*

We must remember that all the criticisms and denunciations of 'Israel' are denunciations of Jacob, who *primarily* was the man Jacob, whose children shared his characteristics. Therefore in some ways

we can feed back from the failures of Israel as a people and see the weakness of Jacob as a man. Thus the way Israel were made to "serve with rigour" in Egypt reflected the way Jacob served in the same way with Laban (Ex. 1:13,14), and thereby implies that Jacob was suffering for his sins and was also idolatrous as they were at that time (Ez. 20:8), while he served Laban.

2:3- see on 2:10

2:10 The very name 'Moses' meaning 'drawn out' suggests he is the prototype for every saint- a called out one. As Moses was drawn out of the Nile and saved, so he later drew Israel out of Egypt. He could exactly enter into their feelings when they emerged from the Red Sea, as Christ exactly knows ours after baptism- better than we appreciate ourselves. Moses was saved by being surrounded by water in an "ark" (Ex. 2:3)- the only other time this word is used is concerning Noah's ark, which is a type of our salvation through baptism. God even worked through Moses' weakness to make him even more representative of his people; as he drew back from the theophany of the burning bush through a bad conscience, so did Israel at the foot of Sinai; as they were excluded from the land for inattention to Yahweh's word, so was Moses. He was touched with the very feeling of their sinfulness. In a marvellous way, the Lord Jesus achieved the same, yet without sin; he really felt like a sinner in his death.

As Moses "looked on their burdens" at age 40 (Ex. 2:11), so at the start of his ministry, our Lord assessed the weight of ours. His concern for our burdens in Mt. 11:30; 23:4 is perhaps a conscious allusion back to Moses' awareness of Israel's burdens, and his desire to deliver them, even though it cost him all that he had in this world. See on Heb. 11:24

Moses manifested / represented both God and Israel, superbly prefiguring the nature of the Lord's work and mission far later. As God "saw" the oppression of Israel (Ex. 2:25; 3:7,9; 4:31; 5:19), so did Moses (Ex.2:11). He looked on God's people with the eyes / perspective of God- just as we should. Moses 'struck' the Egyptian who was persecuting the Hebrew just as God would strike Egypt (Ex. 2:11 cp. Ex. 12:12,13,29 etc.). See on 2:17

Moses as a type of Christ came to his brethren, and saw one of them being beaten by an Egyptian. Moses "looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian" (Ex. 2:11,12). This little incident is typical of how Christ was to destroy the devil, the power of sin, on the cross. The common translation of this passage can give them impression that Moses was very nervous. Yet it does not say that when he saw no man *was looking* he slew the Egyptian. There was at least one man looking- the suffering Israelite. And there must have been others looking for news to get round that Moses had killed the Egyptian. So I would suggest that Moses saw the Israelite suffering, and looked round in wonder to see if any other Israelite was going to go to his rescue. Because he saw there was no man, he himself got involved. This is an eloquent essay in the humility of Moses and the Lord he typified. This is exactly the same picture which we find in Is. 59:16 concerning Christ's decision to achieve our redemption: "He saw that there was no man (quoting the words of Ex. 2:11), and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation" (God saved Israel from Egypt by the *arm* of Moses, manifesting His arm: Ex. 6:6; 15:16; Dt. 4:34; Is. 63:12). Is. 63:4-6 also contain allusions to Moses and the exodus (the rest of the chapter speaks explicitly about this): "The day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year (time) of my redeemed (the one I will redeem) is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation" . The

implication of these passages is that he was surprised, he "wondered", that there was no one else to save Israel. He looked round for someone else to do it, but he found none- exactly after the pattern of Moses. This is not only an eloquent essay in our Lord's humanity, and the monstrosity of the 'trinity'; it indicates the true humility which he manifested in his work of redemption.

2:14,15- see on Heb. 11:27

2:15- see on 4:24

Moses helps and delivers (Ex. 2:17,19) the daughters of Jethro, just as God would help and deliver Israel (Ex. 12:27; 14:13,30; 15:2). Note that at that time when Moses first met Jethro's daughters at the well, Moses was in depression. His plans and vision rejected by his own people, fallen from riches to rags, homeless and alone... and yet in that low moment he was chosen to be a manifestation of God! And this is the wonder of how God rejoices to work with the broken. However, Moses' desire to save others, his concern for the oppressed and helpless, shines through- he seeks to save the slave beaten by his Egyptian master; the neighbour wronged by his Hebrew brother; the unknown women deprived at the well by male nomads (Ex. 2:11,13,17). In all this Moses was manifesting the concern and saving help of God. And when we do likewise, we show God's face to this world. See on 2:11

2:19 Moses flees to Midian, where he helps some unknown shepherd women from being abused by some rough men; he did this without at first receiving any reward, and without the women wanting him to go with them; although they thought he was an Egyptian, showing that he still concealed his relationship with God. See on Jn. 4:7-10

Israel rejected Moses as their deliverer, they failed to see in that dead Egyptian the ability of Moses to save them completely from the life of slavery. And so Moses fled away from them, he came to Gentile, pagan Midian, and rescued a Gentile woman from the persecution of men, married her, and started a new life in the wilderness- to return many years later in the power of the Holy Spirit and redeem Israel when they were in truly desperate straits. All this naturally points ahead to the work of Jesus after Israel failed to respond to his work on the cross. The word used to describe Moses rescuing his future wife from the shepherds is the same used concerning God rescuing Israel from Egypt (Ex. 2:19; 18:10). Thus Moses was manifesting the redemptive work of God when he saved his wife.

2:21 Moses "was content to dwell" with the father of the women. The Hebrew for "content" comes from a root which means weakness of mind; the implication is that he easily yielded to this man.

2:21 "And he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter". She was not one of the covenant people; she was the daughter of a pagan priest (Ex. 18:11 implies Jethro thought Yahweh was only one of many gods); she did not circumcise their children. Should Moses have married her? The fact Moses did not bother circumcising his son shows he was not really serious about his relationship with God; God tried to kill him because of this. God tried to kill Moses because of this; this shows how serious this was in God's eyes. Zipporah was a Midianite, a descendant of Abraham through Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6). Circumcision was a sign of the covenant through Isaac, hence the resentment and bitterness of Zipporah over the circumcision issue; and it seems Moses capitulated to her on this. Their marriage

is sure proof that fundamental spiritual differences at the start can only lead to anger and break up later on.

Ex. 2:24,25 is an example of Angelic limitation: "God heard their groaning (of Israel in Egypt), and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob (all actually made by an Angel). And God looked (the Angels are God's eyes) upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them". God remembering and taking notice of Israel is surely the language of limitation, and applicable to an Angel.

3:4 The double repetition "Moses, Moses" may be some kind of rebuke. "I *have*" seen the affliction of Israel could suggest that Moses felt God was not sensitive to the pain of His children; he had been living for 40 years feeling forgotten by God. Moses "wondered" at what he saw and heard at the burning bush (Acts 7:31)- a Greek word which is often used in a negative sense concerning people lacking faith and insight when they should have had it.

3:5 God appeared to Moses in the flame of fire in the bush, but Moses had to be told to take off his shoes as a sign of respect- even though taking off shoes was understood as a token of respect and recognition of sin (see 2 Sam. 15:30). "Draw not nigh hither...for the place whereon thou standest is holy" sounds as if Moses did not appreciate the holiness of God.

3:6- see on Lk. 20:37

God looked on the sorrows of His people through the sensitivity of Moses, He *saw and knew* their struggles, their sense of being trapped, their desire to revive spiritually but their being tied down by the painful business of life and living; and He sent Moses to deliver them from this. But these very words are quoted about our deliverance through the 'coming down' of the Lord Jesus (Ex. 3:7; 4:31 = Lk. 1:68).

Our guardian Angels are emotional beings, capable of changing their plans in accordance with how moved they are by our prayers, and to an extent they fellowship the sufferings they bring upon us- so the Angel in the burning bush could tell Moses "I have seen the affliction of My people (for whom I am guardian)... and have heard their cry... for I know their sorrows: and I am come down to deliver them. . and to bring them up out of that land (again, the work of the Angel)" (Ex. 3:7,8). The purpose of God in Christ is to "bring together in one all things, which are in Heaven (Angels) and which are on earth (us their charges)", and in the day of judgement we will perhaps be united in some special spiritual sense to our Angel who has redeemed us through this life.

Ex. 3:8 The Angel at the burning bush said "I am come down to deliver thee . . . to bring thee unto the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites. . ". We know an Angel was physically sent in advance of the Israelites to drive out those tribes, and so the phrase "I am come down" used by the same Angel here may therefore be taken literally- He literally, physically "came down". Although this phrase "came down" is often used to describe God manifestation, it may be that when it is used in connection with the Angels, it does have a physical, literal application. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

Through Moses allowing himself to become part of God manifestation, he found a confidence to achieve that which felt impossible to him. He asks God: "Who am I...?" to do the great things God required... and the answer was "I will be who I will be" (Ex. 3:11-13). Moses' sense of inadequacy was met by the principle of God's manifestation in him; and so will ours be, if we participate in it.

3:12- see on Jud. 6:12,16; Dt. 31:8; Ex. 4:4

It even seems that Moses had forgotten the significance of God's Name, even though it had been revealed to Abraham (Ex. 3:13). Moses' fear to look upon God suggests a bad conscience.

God had explained to Moses what He wished him to tell Pharaoh: "Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God" (Ex. 3:18). But Moses actually doesn't say those exact words. Instead he says: "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness...The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice unto Yahweh our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword" (Ex. 5:1,3). This seems perilously similar to the way in which Eve added to Yahweh's words when telling the serpent that actually, God had told Adam not to *even touch* the fruit. Moses appears to be painting Yahweh as somewhat draconian and threatening of him personally as well as Israel- as if to say 'Well sir, please do us this favour, or else our God is gonna get mad with us'. Perhaps this was actually how Moses misperceived Yahweh; or perhaps he added to Yahweh's words in order to make his appeal sound more plausible.

3:18- see on 6:12; 33:14-16

The concepts of being God manifest and also being representative of a sinful Israel come together in Moses in a wonderful way. Ex. 3:18 is an example of this. The elders of Israel were to tell Pharaoh that "the Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us". Yet Yahweh God of Israel had only met with Moses. Yet because he was representative of Israel and also because he himself manifested Yahweh God of Israel, the elders had met Yahweh when they met Moses. In this we see a superb prefigurement of the Lord Jesus. He was the supreme, faultless manifestation of God, and yet also the total, empathetic representative of sinful man.

Moses "supposed his brethren would have understood how that God *by his hand* would deliver them"; but God told Moses at the bush: "I will stretch out *my hand*, and smite Egypt....". Moses had yet to learn the meaning of God manifestation through men- Ex. 3:20 cp. Acts 7:25.

In Ex. 4:4 Moses is told to "put forth" his hand. It is the same word repeatedly translated "let go" in the context of God telling Pharaoh to let Israel go [e.g. Ex. 4:23]. "Caught" is the same Hebrew word frequently translated "harden" in the context of God hardening Pharaoh's heart [e.g. Ex. 4:21]. As the snake hardened in Moses' hand into a rod, so this was how God would deal with Pharaoh through Moses. Thus God is showing Moses that what Moses will do with *his* hand to the snake- a symbol of Egypt- so the hand of God will do, working through Moses' hand. Thus Moses' rod [s.w. Ex. 4:2, about his shepherd's crook] was a symbol of Egypt and Pharaoh. But the throwing down of the shepherd's rod surely also indicated that Moses was to cast down the shepherd's life he had been living, and let God's hand take hold of him, so that his hand became the hand of God. Moses would thus have perceived some sort of parallel between himself and Pharaoh; God was working in

both their lives, and it would take as much courage to grab hold of his own serpent-like life, as it would to do battle with Egypt. Ex. 4:23,24 brings out the parallel between how God told Moses that He would slay the firstborn of Pharaoh; and then seeks to slay Moses and *his* firstborn. And we can see lessons for ourselves here, surely. We throw down our worldly lives, take hold of them in faith, and they are transformed into the rod of God through which He will work wonders. Moses had to perceive the serpent-like aspects of his life and grip them; just as the parallel second sign involved his hand becoming leprous, with all its associations with sin, and then being healed and made strong to be used as the hand of God. What all this shows is that God manifestation, our hand becoming the hand of God, God working through us to deliver His people, is predicated upon our own realization of sinfulness, and grasping it firmly. Ultimately, the hand of Yahweh was revealed through the hand of Moses. Moses was "sent forth" by God to do the work (Ex. 3:12 and frequently); yet the same Hebrew word is used to describe how God 'sent out' ["stretched forth"] the hand of God to do it (Ex. 3:20). And Moses was taught this by being told to 'stretch out' [same Hebrew word] *his* hand (Ex. 4:4). But Moses, for some moments at least, just didn't want to do this. Hence God's anger when Moses comments: "Send [the same word translated "let go" or "put forth" used about Moses being asked to "put forth" his hand in Ex. 4:4] by the hand of him whom thou wilt send" (Ex. 4:13). It was Moses' hand that God had asked to be 'put forth' or 'sent'. But Moses refuses to play a part in God manifestation. He wanted God to send forth another hand, the hand of God personally perhaps; although God had asked him to put forth *his* hand. We too tend to assume that God cannot manifest Himself through *us*; but we all tend to assume someone else will do the job, when it is *we* who are called to it. The rabbis hold that Moses is not being weak here, rather he is referring to the Messiah-the hand whom Moses knew God would one day send forth to save His people. He would then be saying: 'No, I don't want to do this, let the Christ do it'. The same thought is maybe found in Ex. 5:22, when Moses asks Yahweh: "Why is it that thou hast sent [s.w. "put forth" and "let go"] *me*?"- i.e., why don't You use Messiah, the man of Your right hand? And this, subconsciously and unexpressed, is so often our view; He must do it, not me. I'm just a shepherd, God ought to leave me alone in the comfortable monotony of my working life. But He has called us to greater things, to realize as Moses finally did that *we*, you and me, are the ones through whom God truly will work in this world. The rod of Moses ("*thy* rod") became the rod of God (Ex. 4:20); the shepherd's crook, the symbol of an obscure workaday life, became transformed to the rod and arm of God Almighty. There can be no doubt from all this that God was intensely manifest in Moses. The hand of God was manifested through the hand of Moses. Moses had many deep seated spiritual weakness, and also many traits which were not appropriate to leadership, and yet because of his willingness to participate in God's desire to be manifest through him, he was able to be changed and used by God.

4:10- see on Acts 7:22

4:12,15- see on Dt. 31:8

" I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Ex. 4:12) is almost quoted in Mt. 10:19,20 and Mk. 13:11 concerning how we too will be taught what to say when we come before the rulers of our world. In such moments of crisis, Moses, even in weakness as he was at this time, really is our living example.

4:14 " I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people...And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go?...And God said...they shall hearken to thy voice...And Moses answered...They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice (he didn't seem to believe God's promise to inspire him)...I am not eloquent, neither heretofore (i.e. in the past)...I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue (although this was untrue- earlier Moses had been an eloquent speaker in Egypt; actually he was just the right man to do what God wanted)...and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" . Remember that God is *very* slow to this kind of anger (Ex. 34:6). Forty years earlier, Moses had understood, presumably from a direct revelation from God, that God would deliver Israel through him. But he had lost faith in that promise, and was arguing back against God. This was the outcome of many years of spiritual slipping. " Send...by the hand of him whom *thou wilt* send" (alluding to God's Name, I will be) can be seen as indifference; perhaps Moses was saying 'As you do what you will, your name is I will be, then if you send by me, send by men, I can't resist'.

4:18,23 He seems to make the excuse to Jethro that he is homesick for his family who are still in Egypt. And yet straight after this, the Lord confirms him in his desire to return. Moses asks Jethro for permission to return to Egypt to see whether his Hebrew brethren are "still alive" (Ex. 4:18)- yet God had just told Moses that there were indeed Hebrews still alive there who he will lead out of Egypt. Of course Moses *may* have been referring to his literal family; but it's possible that his words to Jethro imply a lack of faith in God's word. At the very least, he was shy to share God's word to him with Jethro. In this context it may be significant that the words God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh at this time in Ex. 4:23 are in fact never said by Moses throughout the dialogue with Pharaoh recorded in Ex. 11 and 12.

4:20- see on 4:4

4:21- see on 4:4

Ex. 4:20,21 states that "Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the Lord said unto Moses . . . see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand". The wonders were done by the Angels we are told in Psalm 78 and other commentaries on the Exodus in Scripture. But Moses through obeying the Word of God had control over those Angels, they were in His hand, symbolized by the rod. And so with us too.

It seems from Ex. 4:23,25 that God tried to kill Moses' son because Moses was not fully believing that God would kill Pharaoh's firstborn.

4:24- see on 4:4; 34:9

The way the Lord "tried to kill" Moses (Ex. 4:24) indicates how God's intentions can be changed by human actions; and it also reflects the limitation of power experienced by the Angel, who presumably was the one who 'tried' to do this but was thwarted by a woman. However in our context of Moses' weakness we need to reflect how this incident echoes how Pharaoh sought to kill Moses in Ex. 2:15. Even through his weakness, Moses was being taught that his personal salvation and continuation in life was by grace. Moses was saved on this occasion by a Gentile woman, Zipporah- just as he had been saved as a baby by another Gentile woman- as well as by the quick-wittedness of his own mother and sister. As Zipporah mediated with the Angel and saved Moses by

touching his son with blood, so Moses would save Israel through his mediation with God and through the Passover ritual (Ex. 12:13,22,23), as well as later throwing blood upon the people (Ex. 24:8). What are we to make of all these echoes and connections of thought? Perhaps that Moses was indeed weak at this time, was saved by grace alone, and yet on that basis he was called to in his turn also save the weak through appealing to God's grace.

4:25,26 Moses' marriage was weak. 40 years later, Zipporah's frustration boiled over: " Surely a bloody husband art thou to me...then she said (again), A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision" . As a descendant of Ishmael she was angry at Isaac's choice and circumcision. This is probably the closest the Bible gets to recording the real life use of taboo language. " Because of the circumcision" suggests she despised Moses' religion. Moses divorced her.

4:31- see on Ex. 3:7

5:1- see on Ex. 3:18

5:22- see on 4:4

"Moses returned to the Lord (the Angel of the bush? It sounds as if he went to a specific place to meet the Lord-i. e. the Angel), and said, Lord, wherefore hast Thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that Thou hast sent me? (the Angel at the bush sent him). . . neither hast Thou delivered Thy people" (Ex. 5:22,23). Moses complained about the Angel, and so God reminded him that 'Yahweh personally will be your Elohim Angels', and that because of his questioning of the Angels he was in fact doubting God Himself personally.

5:22,23 Moses is easily discouraged by the fact that Israel reject him: " Moses returned unto Yahweh, and said, Lord...why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh...thou hast not delivered thy people at all" . The Yahweh / Lord difference may suggest that he got over familiar with the Angel, forgetting the degree to which that Angel carried God's Name.

So great was Moses' concept of the Angel's limitation and characteristic of changing His mind, that he "returned unto the Lord (the Angel), and said, Lord. . . why is it that Thou hast sent me? (The Angel in the bush sent him). For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all" (Ex. 5:22,23). Moses here gives a great warning to us: because God's purpose and the Angels who implement it can change, we must not let this militate against humble faith and works. "My Lord delayeth His coming", the unworthy complain. They are quite right- He does delay, because a few verses later we are told that "the bridegroom tarried" (same word as 'delayeth')- God's purpose, even regarding the time of the second coming, may be subject to change, but this should serve to humble us and increase our faith rather than make us bitter and doubtful of God. Thus God through the Angel responds: "with a strong hand (i. e. by an Angel) SHALL he let (Israel) go" (Ex. 6:1). God goes on to stress that He is ultimately connected with the Angels, therefore implying that to wrongly question them is to question God Himself: "I appeared (through an Angel) unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by God Almighty (i.e. an Angel), and by My Name JEHOVAH was I not known to them?" (Ex. 6:3,7)- this is the correct translation, seeing that God had revealed Himself as Jehovah to the patriarchs, e. g. at Jehovah-Jireh. Moses and Israel would be brought to accept God's vindication of the Angel, so they would know that "I am Jehovah (in) your Elohim (Angels)".

6:1- see on 5:22,23

6:3,7- see on 5:22,23

"I appeared unto Abraham. . . Jacob. . . by the name of God Almighty; and by My Name Jehovah was I not known unto them?" (Ex. 6:3). God had revealed Himself as Jehovah previously (thus Abraham could speak of 'Jehovah Jireh' in Gen. 22:14), but the patriarchs conceived of God as a singular Angel- "God Almighty" (as Jacob: "The Angel that redeemed me from all evil"). Now Yahweh says "ye shall know that I am Yahweh your Elohim which bringeth you out from under the burden of the Egyptians" (Ex. 6:7). God is saying, 'I will be Elohim; I will be manifested not in just one Angel, but in many'.

6:12 God replied by telling him to declare the covenant Name to Israel, and remind them that therefore God would surely save them. But they again failed to respond. " And Moses spake before the Lord, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" . Yet God had promised Moses earlier that Israel *would* hear him (3:18). God solemnly told him to go and speak to Pharaoh, because God had told him to do so. But Moses has the cheek to say exactly the same words to God a second time. In a chapter which speaks much of Moses' reluctance, the record encourages us: " These are that Aaron and Moses...these are they which spake to Pharaoh...these are that Moses and Aaron" (Ex. 6:26,27).

It would appear that all the people of Israel had a guardian Angel- this seems to be implied by Ex. 7:4 "(I will) bring forth Mine armies (of Angels), and My people the children of Israel", implying that there were two armies leaving Egypt- one of Angels, another of their charges. Thus we read in Ex. 12:41 "it came to pass that *all* the hosts of the LORD (a phrase often used about the Angels- but here concerning the Israelites too) went out from the land of Egypt". In the same way as the Angels were especially Israel's guardians in guiding them out of Egypt, it may be that the Angels minister in a guardian capacity to us especially in leading us out of the world to baptism (cp. the Red Sea). Heb. 1:14 offers tentative support in that the Angels are said to "minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation". At baptism we become heirs of salvation (Romans 4:13; Gal. 3:27-29)- those who "shall be heirs" are those as yet outside the promises of salvation. Confirmation of all this is provided by a careful reading of Dt. 33:2,3. This describes God coming "unto them" (Israel) "with ten thousands of saints"- i. e. Angels- and giving them "a fiery Law". The next verse records: "Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy Hand (Angelic language). . . every one shall receive of Thy words". Here the saints appear to be the people, thus showing that God's love to Israel was shown by each of them having an Angel (thousands of saints for thousands of people), who individually taught them the word of God, albeit all at the same time. The Angels in the court of Heaven are watching us, almost with baited breath. We are made a theatre unto the Angels, as if they are in the audience as we act out our lives (1 Cor. 4:9 RVmg.).

7:6 Moses and Aaron agreed to continue speaking to Pharaoh and Israel; they " did as the Lord commanded them, so did they" . This is saying the same thing twice- stressing their obedience.

7:16- see on Ex. 34:27

The signs done by Moses before Pharaoh have evident connection with the later plagues brought upon him- they were all "that you may know" (Ex. 7:17 etc.). The staff, stretched out right hand,

snakes, the rod "swallowing" the serpent rods of Egypt (symbols of Pharaoh- Ez. 29:3-5; 32:2) just as the Egyptians were to be swallowed at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:12), leprosy / boils, water / blood all repeat. The signs were thus both an encouragement to believe as well as a warning of judgment to come. Pharaoh was presented with the possibility of either faith, or destruction. Note in passing that God's hardening of that man's heart didn't mean that He made no effort to save him nor appeal to him.

The record of the miracles is framed to show God commanding Moses to do certain things to bring and end the plagues, and him obedient to this. But Ex. 8:9 RV contains a strange sentence: "Have thou this glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee...to destroy the frogs?". It could be that, in the words of Bro. Mark Vincent, "Moses with an excessive and sarcastic politeness, is asking, 'And (pray tell me!) when exactly would you like the frogs to be gone?', as though Pharaoh might miss them and fondly wish them to stay around for a couple more days". This to me doesn't score very highly in spiritual terms.

Ex. 9:14: "For I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine (Pharaoh's) heart, and upon thy servants. . ". The plagues were physically sent forth in the sense that they were caused by the "Angels of evil" which were "sent among them" (Ps. 78:49). The Angels were therefore literally sent from God with the plagues. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

9:28,29 Let's not read those records as implying that Moses simply uttered a few words to God, and then each of the plagues was lifted. There was an element of real fervency in Moses' prayers- which may well be lacking in ours. This is surely an example of genuinely praying for our enemies (perhaps it is the Old Testament source of Christ's words in Mt.5:44?).

Israel in Egypt had light, but Egypt was in darkness (Ex. 10:23). And yet later, at the time of the Exodus, it was the Angel in the pillar of cloud and fire that gave light to the Israelites and darkness to the Egyptian pursuers. One possible conclusion could be that the guardian Angel of each Israelite was physically with them at the time of the plague of darkness, giving them light and yet darkness to the Egyptians. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

Note that God's comment on Moses was also: "the man Moses was very great" (Ex. 11:3). Yet it is also written that "the man Moses was very meek" (Num. 12:3). Putting the two passages together we have the clear lesson that he who humbles himself is made great; and in this, Moses was not only a type of Christ but also a pattern for all who would go through the pattern which the Lord Jesus set before us: of humbling ourselves now that we might be made great in due time. Moses our example is really a challenge in this.

A classic example of Angelic co-operation is found in the account of the first Passover. Ex. 12:23 says that the Passover Angel would "pass (hover) over the door and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you". 'The destroyer' refers to an Angel- Ps. 78 speaks of the "Angels of

evil" who brought the plagues, and as the plague of the firstborn was one of them, it follows that this too must have been brought about by an Angel. The same Angel is referred to in Jer. 51:1- the "destroying spirit" ["wind", AV] who was sent forth by God to smite Babylon; note how Revelation also describes Babylon as being destroyed by a singular Angel. In another Angelic context we read: "O Lord my Lord; will you be the destroyer of the remnant of Israel?" (Ez. 9:8 Heb.). "Let the Angel of the Lord persecute them" (Ps. 35:5,6) has the same Angel in mind. The destroyer Angel is perhaps alluded to in Job 18:13: "The firstborn of death". Job 33:23 LXX certainly is relevant: "Though there should be one thousand Angels of death...". This same 'destroyer' Angel is referred to again in the context of being present with Israel to punish them if they disobeyed in 1 Cor. 10:10 -"they were destroyed of the destroyer". So we have here on this first Passover night the situation where one Angel is commissioned to do a certain task- in this case kill all firstborn in Egypt- and goes ahead with this task blind to any other consideration, e. g. whether the people concerned were obedient Israelites or not. Therefore another Angel was needed, presumably more powerful or senior to the 'destroyer', to stop the faithful Israelites being killed. Of course God could have given the 'destroyer' additional instructions about not killing the Jews; but it seems to be God's way of working both amongst us and among the Angels to assign each a specific role in the execution of His purpose, and to take pleasure in seeing each Angel or saint working in loving co-operation with another, after the pattern of the Angelic co-operation. Ez. 20:8-14 talks more about this destroyer Angel: "Neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But I wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted among the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt. Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes. . My sabbaths. . the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. . but I wrought for My name's sake, that it should not be polluted" . The destroyer Angel went out through the midst of the land of Egypt to kill the firstborn. He wanted to kill the Jews too because they were not forsaking the idols of Egypt- i. e. they were preparing to take them out of Egypt with them (Ex. 13:17 and Acts 7:43 lend support here). "I"- God manifest now in the Passover Angel- "wrought for My name's sake" (v. 9) against the Destroyer that this should not be done. He remembered how He had "made myself known unto them" in the burning bush, by saying there "I am the Lord your God "(v. 5). "Mine eye (the Passover Angel) spared them from destroying them ",v. 17; i. e. from the work of the Destroyer Angel, both in Egypt at the night of Passover and also in the wilderness. Notice how God is spoken of as both wanting to destroy them and also striving for His Name's sake (born by the Angels) so this should not happen. It seems sensible to interpret this by reference to the two powerful Angels active at this time, perhaps representing the groups of Angels of good and Angels of evil (i. e. disaster bringing) which appear to be in Heaven.

Moses was the foremost intercessor for Israel, and is actually called 'the Paraclete' in the Midrash on Ex. 12:29.

Ex. 12:41 "All the hosts (Angels) of the Lord went out (with Israel) from the land of Egypt". See on Lk. 15:6; Ex. 7:4.

As the firstborn, Moses should have been slain on Passover night (Ex. 13:15); but he made the Passover sacrifice for his own redemption, although Heb. 11:28 says that he did it for the sake of Israel's redemption. Likewise the Lord's almost incomprehensible victory over human nature was not motivated by a selfish desire for his redemption; he did it for himself, that it might be for us. And this is what strengthened him. And on a far lower level, our own salvation is surely worked out through the sacrifices we make for the sake of others' spirituality. The fact that Christ, as Moses, has gone along the same path to salvation really should be a comfort to us, it should lessen the distance which we feel between us and our Lord. Thus a study of typology and of the atonement is not barren; it really will bring us closer to the Lord Jesus if we do it in the right spirit.

Despite their limitations, we know that the work of our guardian is so over-ruled that they will never tempt us above what we are able to bear. The trials they chose for us are in accordance to the spiritual strength they know we possess- thus the Angel leading Israel through the wilderness "led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines; for God (the Angel leading them) said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness" (Ex. 13:17,18). So we see the great fear our guardian Angel has that we will return to Egypt (the flesh), and therefore He gives us trials which will prevent this, although at the time we feel like Israel that the trials are actually enough to make us want to return to the world.

13:21 This is very rhythmic and poetic in Hebrew, as if part of a marching song: "And YHWH went before them / by day in a pillar of cloud / to lead them by the way / and by night in a pillar of fire / to give them the light / to go by day and night. / Aside turns not / the pillar of cloud by day / nor the pillar of fire by night / before the people".

14:2 "Turn", Heb. 'turn back, return'. God told them to go to a location which humanly speaking was a trap- as the Egyptians realized, 14:3. The "turn" back on themselves was humanly senseless when they needed to put as much distance as they could between them and the Egyptians, and gave the appearance of being lost [AV "entangled"]. So God leads us to baptism, leads us to redemption from this world, through bringing us into desperate situations. They were taken to a situation where there was no way out- the sea to the east, high mountains to the south and west, and the Egyptians approaching from the north.

14:8- see on Jn. 14:1

14:8 With a high hand- i.e. the lifted up hand of God (Ex. 15:12; Is. 26:11).

14:13 Stand still- It was by Moses' faith that the Red Sea parted (Heb. 11:29). His faith was based upon the promises of deliverance from and judgment upon Egypt found in Gen. 15:14; 46:3,4. Faith comes from the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

14:19- see on Dt. 4:11

Recognizing the extent of Angelic work in our lives should in itself be a humbling experience, not least because if we recognize we are led by the Angels through life, we cannot plan ahead in our own strength. When Israel crossed the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud that led them went behind them so that the Egyptians could not see ahead of them to where the Israelites were, although the actual distance was not great at all (Ex. 14:19,20). This means that the pillar of cloud, which represented

the Angel leading them, was too thick to see through, and so it follows that if the Egyptians could not see through it when it went in front of them, neither could the Israelites for most of the wilderness journey. And if our lives are truly led by the Angel, we should not expect to see the way ahead stretching in front of us, but just rest assured that we are actually being led.

14:20 The Angel was light to Israel and darkness to the Egyptians. The Angelic appearance on Sinai featured both bright fire and darkness (Dt. 4:11; 5:22). Hence Israel had light but Egypt had darkness in the plague of darkness- because the Angels stood with each Israelite family. What's light to us is darkness to this world.

14:21 East wind- The Red Sea lay broadly North-South in orientation. The people crossed from West to East. This meant they would've been walking against a powerful wind. Participating in God's great salvation involves walking against the wind. But it's this which saves us and opens the way to redemption.

14:21 divided- the idea of waters being divided in "the midst" (Ex. 14:22) recalls the language of creation- the waters were divided "in the midst" (s.w.) (Gen. 1:6). Remember that Moses [albeit inspired by God] wrote both Genesis and Exodus. He may be suggesting that his faith in creation led to his faith that the waters would part. For God had mightily parted waters "in the midst" before. And so our faith in the Genesis creation leads us to faith in God's creative salvation of us in life's crises. Thus the Psalms so often allude to creation as an inspiration for faith.

14:23 Midst- it's emphasized that the Egyptians perished in the midst of the sea (Ex. 14:27). It happened in the morning, when Israel were all safely onshore. The Red Sea at the place of crossing suggested by the geographical references in Ex. 14:2 is only about 1 kilometer wide at most. So if the Egyptians were in the middle of the sea when the last of the Israelites had arrived onshore, the distance separating them would've been only 500 meters at most. They were really close and likely could've heard each other. 14:13 says the Israelites saw the Egyptians- they were that close.

14:24 Morning watch- 02:00 to 06:00 a.m. For the two million Israelites plus their animals to all cross so quickly, they must've been moving in a very wide column, which means that the path cut through the waters was very broad.

Especially do we find the essence of the Red Sea deliverance repeated in life after life, situation after situation, in Israel's history. This happens to the extent that some of the Psalms can speak as if we were there present; and Paul stresses how that passage through water remains a type of the baptism of every believer to this day (1 Cor. 10:1). Take for example how just as Yahweh confounded Israel's enemies at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:24), so He did in Deborah's victory over Sisera (Jud. 4:15); and "not one was left" (Jud. 4:16), just as happened with the Egyptians (Ex. 14:28).

14:25 Jammed the wheels- because of raining upon them (Ps. 77:17-19).

14:31- see on Jn. 14:1

15:1 The theme is expressed in three verses (15:2-5; 6-10; 11-18).

15:2- see on 7:17

15:2 My father's God- Moses was only with his parents in babyhood and maybe very early childhood. They inculcated in him the faith of Yahweh at that early age. They likely died whilst he was still in the court of Pharaoh and looked like an ungrateful child who had gone the way of the world and forgotten his God and his people and their efforts to raise him in the faith. Moses here pays tribute to them. What a surprise awaits them in the Kingdom!

15:4 Cast- they chased after the Israelites into the sea, but God was confirming them in their decision- He was casting them into that water. But if they'd been interviewed as they charged in, they'd have said that they were of their 100% freewill chasing after the Israelites. But God works through and confirms people in their freewill decisions.

The Angels are often portrayed as the controllers of the natural elements- e. g. in Moses' song of thanks for the deliverance at the Red Sea, he seems very conscious of the fact that God was manifest in the Angel, and He thanks Him for "Blowing with (His) wind (cp. "who maketh His Angels spirits/ winds"), the sea covered them" (Ex. 15:10). The other allusions in the Song to the Angel are:

v. 2 "I will prepare Him an habitation"- alluding to the fact that the Angel was going to prepare them a habitation in the land, and perhaps also referring to the building of the tabernacle for the Angel to live in.

v. 2 "my father's God"- alluding to Jacob talking of the God (the Angel, as Jacob meant-see earlier) which preserved him

v. 7 "Thou sentest forth Thy wrath"- the Angel physically sent forth

v. 13 "Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people . . . guided them unto Thy holy habitation"- the language of the Angel in Is. 63 relating how He led and guided them to the land, and also of the promise to send an Angel with them to do this.

15:11 Among the gods- The earlier books of the Bible declare Yahweh as greater than all other gods; later on, especially in Isaiah, it's more specifically stated that the other gods don't exist. Rather like the earlier parts of the Gospel records speaking of God's supremacy over demons / pagan gods; but then such references fade as it becomes apparent that Yahweh is *so* great that the other gods don't exist at all. God is very gentle in how He progressively teaches and reveals Himself to His people. We at times need to do the same in teaching misbelievers and unbelievers.

15:12 Earth swallowed them- as later happened to apostate Israel in the wilderness (Num. 16:32; 26:10). The punishment / judgment upon the world [Egypt] will come upon God's renegade people; they shall be "condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32).

15:13 The Exodus deliverance was seen as part and parcel of being given inheritance in the promised land; just as baptism is for us. We can upset the process, as faithless Israel did in the wilderness.

Moses' song of triumph after the Red Sea deliverance shows a fine spirituality. However, note his possible misunderstanding in Ex. 15:13,17- that Sinai was to be "the place" where God would dwell with Israel.

15:15 Melt away- Israel sung this song with great gusto. And truly it happened, that the Canaanite nations melted in fear of Israel (Josh. 2:11). But Israel's hearts "melted" for fear of those melting Canaanites (Josh. 14:8). Do we believe the words we so fervently sing...?

15:16 Edom- therefore when Edom appear to boldly challenge the passage of the Israelites through their territory, they actually did so with hearts melting in fear of them (Num. 20:18). Rather like the walls of Jericho appearing so strong- yet they were built from chronic fear of the Israelites.

15:16 As a stone- as the Egyptians sunk as a stone (15:5), so would the Canaanite nations. If God could do this to the Egyptians, He would remove all other obstacles to entering the Kingdom. The fact we have been brought out of the world, baptized through the Red Sea (1 Cor. 10:1-3), is comfort and encouragement that all the other obstacles on the Kingdom road will also be dealt with. We can never under-estimate the significance of our own baptisms.

15:17 Sanctuary- the whole land of Israel was intended to be the sanctuary ultimately, and not just the temple mount (Ps. 78:54). But this was one of the many potentials made possible for Israel which never materialized, because of their failures.

15:22 Three days- It had been God's intention that they would go three days journey from Egypt into the wilderness and then worship Him (Ex. 8:27). But they didn't. It seems God purposefully didn't provide water for them- because this great trial was intended to lead them to worship and faith. But instead they rebelled, and His intention they would worship Him then didn't come to fruition. How many billions of such plans are made and frustrated each day by human short-sightedness...

15:27 Twelve wells - one for each of the tribes. The lesson was that God had foreseen Israel's need for water long ago, and arranged those wells for them. As for us in our wilderness journeys.

16:8 Israel's murmurings about the lack of food did not discourage Moses; " the Lord heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: for what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord" . Here we see the beginnings of some real humility in Moses, due to his appreciation of God manifestation in him.

The first time Moses struck the rock, he was standing in the presence of the Angel- "Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock" (Ex. 17:6), but it would seem that the second time Moses took the rod "from before the LORD (the Angel)" (Num. 20:9) and went alone to the rock; this lack of Angelic presence perhaps accounts for his rashness at this time.

17:12 A righteous man, Moses the superb and detailed type of Christ, with his hands above his head, fellowshiping Israel's sufferings, battling with intense spiritual, mental and physical weariness, praying intensely, until sundown. Of course this is pointing forward to our Lord's crucifixion- on account of which our weariness can really be overcome, we really can find the victory over sin which we vain would have. Uplifted hands are something consistently- and frequently associated with intense prayer, often for the forgiveness of God's people Israel (Lam. 2:19; 2 Chron. 6:12,13; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 28:2; 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8). The only time we read of Moses lifting up his hands elsewhere is in Ex. 9:28,29, where his spreading out of his hands is made parallel with his intreating of God to lift the

plagues on Egypt. It must be significant that uplifted hands is also related to a confirmation of God's covenant (see especially Ez. 20:5,6,15,23,28.42; 36:7; 47:14); for this is exactly what Christ did on the cross. And in a sense, this is what was happening in Ex.17; Israel had sinned, God had forgiven them, and was reconfirming the covenant through Moses (notice that one of the terms of the covenant was that God would save Israel from their enemies, e.g. Amalek). See on Jn. 19:18; Gen. 49:22

17:12 It is perhaps significant that there were two men (Aaron and Hur) upholding Moses' arms, in enacted prophecy of how the Angels would strengthen Christ in prayer. Does this point forward to the two Angels especially associated with Christ, Gabriel and Michael? Physically, of course, it was the nails which kept Christ's hands uplifted above his head; yet are we to infer that the Angels even overruled that for a purpose? Moses began to pray standing up, with his hands above his head, with the blazing midday sun beating down upon him (so is implied by the fact that he kept his hands steady until the sun went down. The battle would surely have lasted a few hours; perhaps eight, which was the length of time Christ hung on the cross?) But he just couldn't maintain this intensity of mental and spiritual concentration; he let down his hands. But from his high viewpoint, he could see (and hear?) the panic of Israel as they started to flee before their enemies. So he returned to his mental battle. No doubt when he let down his hands, he continued praying, but not so intensely. Yet he came to realize, perhaps after a few cycles of Israel starting to flee before Amalek, that his prayer was absolutely essential for Israel's survival and victory. But he knew that he just couldn't physically go on. His knees were weak, he was going to have to abandon his favourite prayer posture of standing (cp. the earlier records of his prayers in Exodus). His mind must have desperately raced as to how he could go on. At the back of his mind, he would have thrown his predicament upon the Lord. And a way was made. " They took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands" (v.12). Note how Moses did not waste his energy in getting the stone for himself; we get the picture of total mental devotion to Israel's cause, a man all consumed with his prayer, being humanly helped by lesser men. Israel's salvation depended on his totally voluntary intercession. The type is powerful. Peter reasons that Christ's attitude in prayer should be ours (1 Pet. 4:1). His prayers then, and ours now, were a struggle, after the pattern of Jacob.

That memorial was physically symbolized by the building of the altar called Jehovah- Nissi (17:15). This literally means 'Jehovah is my pole'; this is a word used indirectly in prophecies about the cross of Christ.

17:16 YHWH is my banner- the raised staff was as a flagpole, but Moses wanted to show that the victory was in Yahweh and not in the rod of itself.

Moses "put away" this woman- Ex. 18:2 LXX is the same "put away" as in 1 Cor. 7:11-13. Moses allowed divorce for the hardness of Israel's hearts (Mt. 19:8) and yet he himself appears to have divorced her- for the hardness of his heart?

18:3,4 However, Moses' children had names which showed some faith, and a recognition he was a stranger in the land where he was living; he lived as a stranger in Midian. Few people live in a country for 40 years without feeling they belong to it. But his mind was in the past, in how God had been good to his father, and how God had saved him from Pharaoh's death threat.

18:5- see on Ex. 34:27

18:7- see on 33:3

18:10- see on 2:19

18:11- see on 2:21

Moses accepts Jethro's advice on the basis that he will "surely wear away" (Ex. 18:18); even though his natural strength never abated (Dt. 34:7), and God surely would not have asked him to do the impossible. Jethro at this time seems to have seen Yahweh as only one of many gods; he was a pagan priest. He prophesied that if Moses followed his advice, "all this people shall go to their place in peace" - which they didn't.

19:20- see on Ex. 20:23

19:21-24- see on Dt. 5:5

Moses assumed that Israel would not possibly try to break through the barriers around Sinai to "gaze" - "for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount and sanctify it" (Ex. 19:23). He over-estimated their obedience, so much did he love them.

Wherever an ordinary Israelite offered sacrifice, "I will come unto thee [‘you’ singular] and bless thee" (Ex. 20:23). This is the very language of God coming unto Moses on the top of Sinai (Ex. 19:20 RV)- as if to imply that the very pinnacle of Moses' relationship with God, meeting Him on the top of the mount, is just as attainable for each of God's people who truly sacrifices to Him.

20:19- see on 39:43

22:26- see on Dt. 24:10

Ex. 23:20 "I send an Angel before thee" (Israel at Sinai). It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

Moses encouraged Joshua (and all uncertain journeyers through the wilderness) by commenting on the great work of the Angels in preparing the way to enter the promised land. There is a connection made between the fear of God among the Canaanite nations, the "hornet", and the Angel: "I send an Angel before thee. . . I will send my fear before thee. . . and I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee" (Ex. 23:21,27,28).

The idea of Angels being sent out from this council to operationalize Divine commissions opens up so many Scriptures. An Angel was sent before Israel to keep them in the way (Ex. 23:30)- an evident allusion to the Angel-cherubim keeping the way to the tree of life. But did all Israel remain "in the way" whilst in the wilderness? Evidently not. Did the Angel fail? No. The Angel was given power and strength in order to potentially enable Israel to remain "in the way", just as our Angels are given that same power. But Israel refused to work with the Angel; they didn't make use of the Angel's efforts to keep them in the way.

The ark was covered in the tabernacle by the various layers of the tent detailed in Ex. 26:1-6: sea cows' skins, red rams skins, goats hair, blue, purple, scarlet and linen. These would form a kind of rainbow over the ark, and above that there was the Angel in the pillar of cloud or fire. This "pattern of things in the Heavens" replicated the visions of a throne (the ark) over-arched by a rainbow and the glory of God.

23:20- see on Hos. 12:13

Israel's guardian Angel was to "keep" them in the way (Ex. 23:20), clearly echoing how the Angels kept the way to the tree of life in Eden. The same Hebrew word for "keep" occurs very often in Exodus in the context of Israel being told to keep God's commands; but their freewill effort was to be confirmed by the Angel keeping them in the way of obedience. They were to "keep" themselves in the way (Dt. 4:9 and many others; s.w. "take heed", "observe" etc.), but the Angel would keep them in it. This mutuality is developed in Ex. 23:21, where having said the Angel will keep them, Israel are told "Beware of him, and obey his voice". "Beware" translates the same Hebrew word as "keep". The Angel would keep them., but they were to keep to the Angel. This is an example of how we are intended to have a mutual relationship with our guardian Angel, leading to Him strengthening us in the one way. This word translated "keep" is also translated "spies" in Jud. 1:24; the spies were the keepers in the way of Israel, to bring them in to the land. And yet the Angel at the exodus was their 'keeper' to bring them into the land. The spies were working in harmony with their Angels; and thus they succeeded.

In Exodus 23:21 the Angel is described as not forgiving their sins, but in Ex. 32:30-32 Moses goes up to the 'LORD' (Angel) in the mount and asks for forgiveness for the people's sin with the golden calf- see on 34:9. The 'Lord' in the mount must have been an Angel because Moses saw his back parts- and there is no way this is possible of God Himself in person, "whom no man hath seen ,nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). This 'Lord' on the mount gave Moses the Law- and elsewhere we are told that the Law was ministered by Angels. The Angel on the mount then says He has sent "Mine Angel before thee" (to Canaan), Ex. 32:34. So we have one Angel sending another here. And it seems one Angel was prepared to forgive, the other wasn't. What implications does this have for us, if we are to be made like unto the Angels (Lk. 20:35,36)?

23:21- see on Josh. 24:17

23:22- see on Dan. 9:14

In Ex. 23:27 God says He will "send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come". Jacob likens his guardian Angel to "the God before whom my fathers walked" (Gen. 48:16), who is called "the fear of Isaac" (Gen. 31:42,53) when Jacob describes the personal presence of God in his life. So the "fear of God" is associated with an Angel; God sent His fear, an Angel, before Israel into Canaan, as promised explicitly in Ex. 23.

It seems to me that God's intention was that His people Israel were to develop their nation into the world-wide Kingdom of God on earth- a calling they miserably failed to achieve in the past, even though the prophets speak of the wonderful way it will come true in the future. Their territory would have literally been "to the ends of the earth"- and perhaps that's why there's the ambiguity in the Hebrew word *eretz*, which can mean both 'the land / earth' of Israel, and the whole planet earth.

Further, the 70 Jewish elders appointed in Ex. 24:9-11 were what the New Testament letter to the Hebrews calls a reflection of the things of Heaven on earth- for there were 70 Gentile nations within the *eretz* / land promised to Abraham (tabulated in Genesis 10), and I suggest that these 70 elders were intended to ultimately rule over them. This would explain the enigmatic Dt. 32:8, which speaks of the boundaries / differentiation of the Gentile nations being set according to "the sons of Israel", or (LXX) "the Angels of God". Putting the evidence together, it would seem that there were 70 Gentile nations in the *eretz* / land, represented in Heaven by 70 Angels, who in turn were represented on earth by the 70 elders of Israel. It was God's intention that His people should rule over the nations- and yet they as it were marred the reflection of what was in Heaven, the pattern of things in Heaven became ignored. And yet the day is yet to come when men will eagerly take hold of the skirts of a Jew and go with him to worship the true God. From all this I see yet again all the potentials God has made possible for us in our age... and how, despite the fact He may foreknow that we'll waste them, He still sets up those potential possibilities for us. We are too are chosen to be king-priests over this world (Rev. 5:10), we too have a representative Angel in Heaven beholding God's face... yes, *you*, and me. We have an Angel there. It's for us to go ahead and reflect the pattern of Heaven here on earth.

24:12 The Law was "a law...which I (Yahweh) have written" (Ex. 24:12). Yet the Lord Jesus speaks of *Moses* writing the precepts of the Law (Mk. 10:5). "The book of the law of Moses" is parallel with "the book of the law of Yahweh" (Neh. 8:1; 2 Chron. 17:9); it was "the book of the law of Yahweh given by Moses" (2 Chron. 34:14). God was so strongly manifest in Moses.

4:70 see on Jn. 7:34

The commands concerning the tabernacle were given to Moses by the Angel- do phrases like "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8) have primary reference to the Angel speaking the words? In the same way, does Psalm 99:1 refer also to the physical presence of an Angel between the cherubim? "The LORD reigneth. . He sitteth between the cherubim (through His Angel); let the earth (land of Israel) be moved". Similarly "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel (the Angel- so Isaiah 63 describes the wilderness Angel), thou that leadest Joseph like a flock (the Angel lead them through the wilderness); thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth" (Ps. 80:1). And again in Ps. 20:1,2 "The God of Jacob (i. e. the Angel who Jacob recognized had been so much in his life) defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary. . ", as if it was in the sanctuary (Holy Place) that the Angel was located. See on Ps. 78:60

25:9- see on Jn. 5:19,20

The fact that the Cherubim and the mercy seat were made of the same material shows the unity between Christ and the Angels in God's purpose (Ex. 25:19); thus the stone, representing Christ, has the seven Angel eyes of God embedded in it in Zech. 3:9.

25:22- see on 2 Sam. 23:1-3

25:33,34- see on Jer. 1:11,12

28:8 The significance of the colours should not be over emphasized. Israel in the wilderness only had a limited range of things with them, and as with the use of the shittim wood for the tabernacle construction, God was [and is] in a sense limited by the material He chooses to have available to work

with.

28:10 *According to their birth* - Jacob had tried to re-arrange the order of his sons according to his judgment of them, but his judgment was somewhat human. God takes no notice of it here.

Note that *we* are to wear the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14); all that is true of Christ is in some sense true of those who are in Him. We too are to seek to bear others' burdens of sin, enter the Most Holy and seek to reconcile others to God. The many applications of the OT High Priestly language to ordinary believers would've been so difficult for our early Christian Jewish brethren to accept. We are right now sitting in heavenly places [cp. the Most Holy] with Christ, who sits there at God's right hand (Eph. 2:6).

28:12 Bearing on the shoulders by the High Priest in order to gain atonement surely looks forward to the Lord bearing the cross on His shoulders. Yet He bore our sins. The cross is presented as symbolic of the weight of our sins.

28:38 *Accepted* - Heb. delighted in, great pleasure. Those whose names are carried by the High Priest thereby and therefore become God's great pleasure and delight. His delight in us, seeing us as unblemished, is a great Bible theme. The transaction seems in a sense unfair- that because of the work of one man, many could come into that status. But this is the challenge of faith.

32:10 Note how God's anger "waxed hot" and so did that of Moses. But Moses asks God not to wax hot in anger (Ex. 32:10,11,19). What are we to make of this? Surely, positively, Moses was totally in tune with the feelings of God. And yet he does himself what he asks God not to do. What score would we give Moses for this?

32:11 See on Ex. 34:9; 33:1

Ex. 32:17,18 is an example of Joshua's genuine naivety- thinking that Israel were far stronger than they were. He mistook the sound of their idolatrous partying for the sound of a battle; and Moses almost rebukes him for his naivety. He allowed the leaders of Israel to lead him into wrong decisions about the initial attack on Ai, and also into being deceived by the Gibeonites. And yet as a younger man, he had boldly stood up to the peer pressure of the princes of Israel in faithfully declaring that Israel could and should go up into Canaan; when the other princes must have put huge pressure upon him to agree with them. He is described as maintaining "another spirit" to theirs (Num. 14:24). The resolution of youth seems to have been somewhat lost as he grew older.

It is simply fantastic that Moses could love those people so intensely, despite their aggression and indifference towards him. He was prepared to give his place in the Kingdom so that they might enter; he *prayed* God to accept his offer. He knew that atonement could only be by sacrifice of blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22; and see the similarity with Phinehas making an atonement for Israel's forgiveness through the slaying of Zimri and Cozbi in Num. 25:8,13); and yet he climbed the Mount with the intent of making atonement himself for Israel's sin (Ex. 32:30); he intended to give his life for them. And he didn't make such a promise in hot blood, as some men might. He made the statement, and then made the long climb to the top of the mount. And during that climb, it seems

he came to an even higher spiritual level; he was prepared not only to offer his physical life, but also his place in the Kingdom (Ex. 32:32 cp. Ez. 13:9; Dan. 12:2; Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 20:12). Now although hopefully we are not rejecting Christ as they did, the fact still stands that the love of Moses for Israel typifies the love of Christ towards us. The degree, the extent of Moses' love, is but a dim foretaste of the *degree* of the love of Christ for us. Now in this is something wonderful, something we really need to go away and meditate about. And the wonder of it all is that Israel did not realize the extent of Moses' love at the time. At the end of his life he recounts how God has threatened to destroy the people, and then "I turned and came down from the mount" (Dt. 9:15). He doesn't record his 40 days of pleading with the Father, and how he turned down the offer of having himself made into a great nation. In this we see tremendous spiritual culture, pointing forward to the Lord's own self-perception of His sacrifice.

32:30-32- see on Rom. 9:3; Dt. 1:37

Moses is called up into Sinai and speaks with God. While there, Israel turn away from God, and God wants to make Moses' family His people and reject Israel. But Moses argues with God against this, again showing his humility and his appreciation of God's manifestation in Israel, and his earnest desire that God would save Israel. "He said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath". This was only months after his weak faith and reluctance to lead Israel out of Egypt. He says that he will "go up (and) make an atonement" (Ex. 32:30). And yet he knew the principle that atonement was impossible without shedding blood. Yet he goes further than that: "Blot me, I *pray thee* (he really wanted to do this) out of thy book" (Ex. 32:32)- i.e. the book of salvation (Ez. 13:9; Dan. 12:2; Lk. 10:20; Rev. 20:12). Moses is willing to give his physical life and also his eternal salvation so that Israel can enter the land. Surely he reached matchless heights of selflessness. And he begged Yahweh to accept this for 40 days and nights, fasting without food or water (Dt. 9:17; 10:10). It wasn't just a once off, emotional outburst of a moment.

32:32 To be blotted out of the book God had written may have been understood by Moses as asking for him to be excluded from an inheritance in the promised land; for later, a 'book' was written describing the various portions (Josh. 18:9). The connection is made explicit in Ez. 13:9: "...neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel". To be blotted out of the book meant to not enter the land (surely Ezekiel is alluding to Moses' experience). If Israel were to be blotted out there and then in the wilderness, then Moses wanted to share this experience. God had just spoken of 'blotting out' Israel from before Him (Dt. 9:14), and making a nation of Moses; but now Moses is asking to share in their condemnation rather than experience salvation without them. This was the extent of his devotion. On the last day of his life, Moses reeled off the great speech of Deuteronomy, knowing full well that he was to die without entering the land. In Dt. 9:18 he says that his prayer of Ex. 32:32 *was heard*- in that he was not going to enter the land, but they would. Hence his urging of them to go ahead and enter the land- to experience what his self-sacrifice had enabled. In this we see the economy of God, and how He works even through sin. On account of Moses' temporary rashness of speech, he was excluded; Moses didn't enter the land. And yet by this, his prayer was heard. He was temporarily blotted out of the book, so that they might enter the land. Moses' fleeting requests to enter the land must be read as a flagging from the height of devotion he reached, rather like the Lord's request to escape the cross in Gethsemane. But ultimately he did what he intended- he gave his place in the Kingdom /

land so that they might enter [although of course he will be in the future Kingdom]. This is why Moses stresses on the last day of his life that he wouldn't enter the land *for Israel's sake* (Dt. 1:37; 3:26; 4:21). He saw that his sin had been worked through, and the essential reason for him not entering was because of the offer he had made. It "went ill with him *for their sakes*" (Ps. 106:32). In all this, Moses was typifying the death of the Lord. Is. 53:8 describes His cross as being "cut off [Strong: 'excluded'] from the land of the living" (s.w. 'the congregation' - of Israel), for the transgression of His people. This is undoubtedly reference to the self-sacrificial exclusion of Moses from the land, that Israel might enter. The Lord died the death of a sinner, He chose like Moses to suffer affliction with us, that we might be saved. The intense prayer of Moses for Israel's salvation inspired David in prayer (Ps. 25:11 = Ex. 32:30,31). See on 2 Tim. 2:24,25

32:34 Ex. 33:11,12 show Moses talking to the LORD "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend"- i. e. in a relaxed, friendly way. Thus the identity of the 'LORD' is clearly an Angel. This Angel says in v. 20 that His face cannot be seen by any man, but His back parts may be seen by Moses. The fact He could be seen at all shows He was not God Himself. Perhaps we are hearing another Angel speak, more mighty than the one with whom Moses spoke face to face. Or the Angel with whom Moses spoke started to manifest God to a different degree. The 'LORD'- the Angel- then says, 33:14, "My presence shall go with thee". This "presence" was another Angel, as 32:34 makes clear: "behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee". This would suggest there were two Angels involved.

The manifestation of God in a person leads to a mutuality between them. There's a nice example of the mutuality between God and Moses in Ex. 33:1, where God says that *Moses* brought up Israel out of Egypt; but in Ex. 32:11, Moses says [as frequently] that *God* brought Israel out of Egypt. And we too can experience this mutuality in relationship with the Father.

33:3 I will not...- see on Ex. 34:9

It was because of the physical presence of the Angel in the tabernacle that when the Angel located Himself outside the camp, the tabernacle was set up again in that same location outside the camp- "I will not go up in the midst of thee (said the angel). . . and Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp. . . as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended (the Angel). . . and the Lord spake unto Moses face to face" (Ex. 33:3,7,9,11). In passing, note that it was because Joshua lived in this tent (he "departed not out of the tabernacle") that he is said in Ps. 91 to have made his habitation with the Angel, who therefore protected him in the subsequent wanderings. And to raise the fascination factor, note that the Septuagint tells us that Moses "pitched his own tent" and called it the tabernacle (Ex. 33:7 LXX); similarly, "the tent" may be a synonym for Moses' own tent (see Ex. 18:7). Does this mean that the mighty Angel of Israel was Moses' personal guardian, seeing that "the Angel of the Lord encampeth (tent language again) around about them that fear Him" (Ps. 34:7)? See on Ps. 78:60

God told Moses that because Israel were stiffnecked, therefore He could not go up with them (Ex. 33:5). Moses agrees the people are stiffnecked, but he knows God well enough to ask Him to still go up in the midst of them (Ex. 34:9). And God did! He acted according to how broad was Moses' conception of God's grace. If Abraham's conception of grace had been even broader, perhaps Sodom would've been saved... Moses' achievement is all the more remarkable because he himself struggled with grace.

33:6- see on 1 Sam. 18:4

33:11 God spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. God knew Moses by name (Ex. 33:12,17) and so He shews Moses *His* Name (Ex. 33:17,19)- there developed a mutuality between the two. See on Ps. 90:8; Ps. 90:1

Joshua is consciously set up as our example. When Paul says that we *each* with unveiled face have beheld the glory that shines from the face of the Lord Jesus, just as the glory to a lesser extent shone from the face of Moses (2 Cor. 3:18 RV). Yet the only person to behold Moses' unveiled glory was Joshua, who alone lived in the tabernacle where Moses received the glory (Ex. 33:11). And it was he who alone accompanied Moses up the mount to meet with God (Ex. 24:13). When Moses left Joshua and went out to the people, he veiled his face. But Joshua would have seen the glory shining off Moses' unveiled face.

God assures Moses that he has found grace in His eyes [i.e. before the Angel with whom Moses met?]. And yet Moses says: "If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way that I may know thee, to the end that I may find grace in thy sight" (Ex. 33:12,13 RV). Despite having been told that he had found grace, Moses still wanted confirmation... as if the voice of God wasn't enough! And maybe there is even the implication that he mistakenly thought that he needed more *knowledge* of God before he could find that grace... as if it depended upon his own mental faculties. And yet God patiently assures Moses yet again: Thou *hast* found grace in my sight", and goes on to proclaim His Name to Moses. "I *will be gracious* to whom I will be gracious" (Ex. 33:19) was surely said specifically to Moses, given the context of Moses' doubts about his receipt of God's grace. The coming down of Yahweh to pronounce His Name was, in the context, to show how far God would go to assure Moses that yes, His grace towards Moses was real. We too struggle with grace, and are given, also by grace, this undeserved assurance upon assurance.

33:14 see on Is. 63:9

"I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33:14), the Angel said (33:11). But they did not enter that rest- Heb. 4:8,10. "Rest" was defined as the land being subdued before God with all the tribes driven out (Josh. 1:13,15; Num. 32:21,22; 1 Chron. 22:18). This being conditional on Israel's faithfulness, we conclude that when the Angel said "I will give thee rest" He was speaking of what was possible in prospect; or perhaps He over-estimated Israel's obedience, or was unaware of the degree to which their entering the rest was conditional on their obedience.

33:14-16 When Yahweh met Moses, it was as if He met with Israel (Ex. 3:18). God promised to go with Moses, but Moses re-quotes this as God going with "us" (Ex. 33:14-16). This is how inextricably linked were Moses and his people, even in their condemnation. And so it is, thankfully, with us and the Lord.

33:16 We too are called to behold the *glory of God*. Moses seems to have struggled to believe that he really had been invited to such an experience (Ex. 33:16; 34:9,34).

Moses asked to see the face of the Angel (33:18 cp. v. 20); presumably it was a different Angel to whom he spoke face to face (33:11), or perhaps the same Angel but manifesting God to a different degree or alternatively a different, more powerful Angel. The fact Moses saw the back parts of this 'LORD' shows that the 'LORD' was not God Himself in person- no man has ever seen Him, or even started to approach the light in which He dwells (1 Tim. 6:16 etc.); this must include Moses. This conclusion chimes in with the type of statements about 'the LORD' which we read in these chapters, which suggest reference to the Angel rather than to God Himself:

33:1 "The LORD said. . the land which I swore unto Abraham. . ". We have seen that it was the Angel which made these promises.

33:2 "I will drive out the Canaanite. . "; this was done by the Angel of the LORD sent before to do this.

33:3 "I will not go up in the midst of thee (i. e. the Angel was saying He would no longer dwell in the Holiest): lest I consume thee"- the consuming of Israel for their sins on the journey was done by the 'destroyer' Angel. We can therefore suggest that the Angel was manifest in some way, perhaps through two separate Angels, both in the pillar of fire going before them, and also in the Holy of Holies. See on Ez. 20:17

33:18- see on Jn. 14:1

Moses knew his closeness to God through manifestation, and yet he yearned to see God physically, he struggled with his distance from God (Ex. 33:18,20).

There is maybe a connection between Moses hiding in the " cleft of the rock" (Ex. 33:22) and Elijah hiding in a similar place to witness a theophany whose aim was to *humble* him. Is. 2:10-12 makes a similar connection.

33:22-see on Is. 2:10

Ex. 34:7. The fact punishment was not always given until the third or fourth generation may simply reflect God's characteristic grace in relenting upon His threatened judgments. But it may also be because the judgment is carried out by the Angels, who changed their decreed intentions with Israel, Moses and others.

34:9- see on Ps. 90:8

Moses seems to have pleaded with the Angel to change His stated purpose of not going up with the children of Israel through reminding the Angel of the mockery this would bring Him into among the nations around. Thus Ex. 34:9 shows Moses pleading for this "O LORD, let my Lord (the Angel) I pray thee, go amongst us" after the clear statement in Ex. 33:3 "I will not go up in the midst of thee". So let us not be afraid to ask God to change what seems like His purpose in our lives, no matter how hard it seems, if we truly feel that another way would give Him more glory. Moses would not have tried if he did not think success in that prayer was possible. But he not only tried, he succeeded. Also consider Ex. 32:11: "Moses besought the face of the LORD (A. V. mg-i. e. the Angel) and said, LORD, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt (the Angel did this). . turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people". Thus Ezek. 20:17 says that God's eye (the Angel) "spared them. . in the wilderness" when they

provoked Him. Psalm 90 is Moses meditations on the fact that his generation were slowly dying in the wilderness, and on the vapidness of life at that stage. And yet he is bold enough to plead with God to change His purpose- "Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy (i. e. don't leave it till some distant point in the future when Messiah is here to show me Thy mercy- do it early, do it now). . make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us. . " (v. 13-15). So from his previous experience of changing God's purpose , Moses was not afraid to try and do so again. This possibility of God changing His mind about this is shown by the Hebrew of Ps. 95:11: "That they should not (Heb. 'If they enter', as AVmg.) enter My rest". The ambiguity here nicely shows the possibility of them entering.

The Angel's eagerness to repent and willingness to accept even the slightest sign of repentance in His charges, explains why Moses was so willing to strive to make the Angel repent by his prayers. Thus in Ex. 34:9 Moses asks the Angel to forgive the people' sin, although it was one of the Angel's stated principles not to do so (Ex. 23:21). Moses had had personal experience of such repenting; the Angel "sought" to kill him, but God changed his mind due to Moses' repentance (Ex. 4:24).

The commands which constituted the covenant were given to Moses personally (Neh. 1:7,8), insofar as he represented Israel. Thus there is a parallel drawn in Ps. 103:7: He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel" . " After the tenor of these words have I made a covenant with thee and with Israel" (Ex. 34:27). In the context of describing Israel's deliverance from Egypt, they are said to have been delivered from "the basket" (Ps. 81:6 RV)- clearly associating them with Moses' deliverance. Is. 63:11 (Heb.) is even more explicit: " He remembered...*Moses his people*" . Moses seems to have appreciated fully his representative role on that last glorious day of life when he addressed Israel: " The Lord said unto *me*...I will deliver [Og] into *thy* hand...so the Lord our God delivered into *our* hands Og" (Dt. 3:2,3). David recognized this unity between Moses and Israel; David describes both Israel and Moses as God's chosen (Ps. 16:5,23). Moses is described as encamping in the wilderness, when the reference clearly is to all Israel (Ex. 18:5). Moses recalled how "the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have delivered up Sihon and his land before thee [you singular- i.e. Moses]; begin to possess it, that thou [you singular again!] mayest inherit his land". Yet Moses then comments that therefore God "delivered" Sihon "before *us*" (Dt. 31,33 RV). The land and victory that Moses personally could have had- for it was God's wish to destroy Israel and make of him a new nation- he shared with Israel. Ex. 7:16 brings out the unity between them by a play on words: "The LORD God of the Hebrews hath *sent me* [lit. 'let me go'] unto thee, saying, *Let my people go*". "Let go" translates the same Hebrew word as "sent me". Just as Moses had been let go by Yahweh, so Israel were to be.

34:33-35- see on 2 Cor. 3:15-18

37

:1 *Shittim wood*- This bush was all they had in the wilderness. It was hardly suitable for making furniture, being brittle and the sticks very thin and hard to weld together. The root translated "shittim" really means a stick or rod, and is translated "thorns" in Josh. 23:13. We shouldn't be surprised at the brittle nature of the folk with whom God works, their difficulty in binding together and resistance to being worked with- this is as it were all God has to work with.

:2 *Crown*- As if it represented a person, a King- the Lord Jesus

:8 The mercy seat [representing Christ] and the cherubim [Angels] were of one piece and of the same material- but Heb. 1 is clear that Christ was not an Angel. In this we see the danger of over-interpreting types.

:6 *The mercy seat*- This is clearly stated in Rom. 3:25 to represent Christ, in whom has been set forth for all to see the salvation of God in Christ. But note that only the High Priest once / year was able to view the mercy seat covered in the blood of atonement. It's as if we are each now the High Priest, if we are in Christ. We can now with boldness, not as the fearful High Priest, enter the Most Holy place (Heb. 10:29). The veil has been opened. We can enter, in order to gain atonement for others. The "seat" implies someone sat upon it- there God was enthroned in all the glory of His forgiveness of men through the blood of Christ. He "dwelt between the cherubim" (Ps. 80:1; 99:1). There was the impression held by Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:15) and David (2 Sam. 6:2) that God dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy seat. "Justice and judgment" are where God was enthroned (Ps. 89:14), and this refers to the blood sprinkled mercy seat where God was especially enthroned in glory on the day of Atonement. His forgiveness and salvation has integrity, it's not a turning of a blind eye, a waiving of principle. In this is the wonder of our salvation. Note that the cherubim peered down upon the blood- alluded to in 1 Pet. 1:11,12, which says that the Angels earnestly look into the things of the blood of Christ. The cherubim were of gold, of one piece with the mercy seat, but Jesus was not an Angel by nature (see Heb. 1)- which warns us not to over-interpret tabernacle types.

Moses' personal blessing of the people was that of God (Dt. 33); and when he looked with pleasure upon the completed tabernacle and blessed Israel, he was imitating God's inspection and blessing of the completed natural creation (Ex. 39:43). Yet Israel tragically failed to appreciate the degree to which God was manifest in the words of Moses, as they did with Christ. This is shown by them asking for Moses to speak with them, not God; they failed to realise that actually his voice was God's voice. They failed to see that commandments given 'second hand' really are the voice of God (Ex. 20:19). Perhaps our appreciation of inspiration is similar; we know the theory, but do we really see the wonder of the fact that what we read is the awesome voice of God Himself?

1:1- see on Num. 20:12-14

Even though leaven was prohibited in offerings (Lev. 2:11), God was willing to accept a peace offering with leaven in it (Lev. 7:13).

Lev. 4:17 describes the priest as sprinkling the blood "before the LORD, even before the veil". This implies that the veil and the "LORD" were associated, as if the Angel, the 'LORD', was just behind the veil, i. e. in the Most Holy. See on Ps. 78:60

Aaron asks: "Would it have been well pleasing in ths sight of Yahweh?", and then we read "And when Moses heard that, it was well-pleasing in *his* sight" (Lev. 10:19,20 RV). God was so manifest in Moses.

17:11 The symbolism of blood in the Bible is difficult. At times it seems to mean simply 'life', at others, it appears to be used for 'death'. We are saved by the blood of Christ- His life, outgiven in death, and His resurrection life lives in us today through the Spirit. God did not demand the death of

animals because He simply is pleased by death. What He wants from us is our lives, not that we accept Christ and kill ourselves. 1 Cor. 10 speaks of how we have fellowship with the blood of Christ through the memorial drinking of wine, but in practice this surely refers to our physical symbolism of how we are sharing in His life; His life becomes ours. Life is not ours to take, we are to give it to God- that's the whole idea of the repeated Old Testament emphasis upon not drinking blood but pouring it out to God. The Lord Jesus alludes to all this by urging us to drink *His* blood, *His* life- the life we live in the flesh we are to live by, or 'on account of', Jesus (Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:11).

When the psalmist says, 'What profit is there in my blood?' he means, 'What profit is there in my death?' (Ps. 30:9). The idiom of 'blood upon him' means that a person bears the guilt for another's death. "His blood be on us" (Mt. 27:25) clearly means they accepted guilt for the death of Jesus. Babylon is a woman "drunken with the blood of the saints"- guilty of their death (Rev. 17:6; 18:24). "Innocent blood" is brought upon a person by allowing the death of an innocent person (Jer. 26:15 RV). The blood of the innocent cries out to God- in the sense that their *death* cries out to Him for vengeance (Gen. 4:10). The Leviticus passages state that "the life is in the blood", meaning that once the life is taken out of a person or animal, then they are dead [this is an oblique evidence against the notion of an 'immortal soul']. In this sense, blood refers to death as well as life. We have no right to shed blood because all life is God's; and likewise we have no right to think that our life is our own. It is God's. Even animal life was seen as belonging to God- the blood of animals had to be poured out to Him in acknowledgment of this. Our thanks to God for meat is gratitude that He has allowed us to kill and eat animals, to take their lives. "The blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20) clearly means the death of the cross, rather than the blood of Jesus which was smeared on the cross as opposed to His blood generally.

Lev. 19:17 "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him". The implication is that if we don't have transparency with our neighbour, if we don't rebuke them openly and specifically, then we will end up hating them. Just saying nothing about those situations calling for rebuke will only drive you to hate the person in the end.

For a freewill offering, God would accept a deformed animal (Lev. 22:23), even though this was against His *preferred principle* of absolute perfection in offerings. There was no atonement without the shedding of blood; and yet for the very poor, God would accept a non-blood sacrifice. This all reflected the zeal of God to accept fallen men.

26:22 see on 1 Kings 22:22

3:9- see on Jn. 17:6

3:12- see on Jn. 17:9

Num 5

Numbers 5 contains three related pieces of legislation: 1) Removing lepers from the camp 2) Making reconciliation to your brother 3) The trial of jealousy. Chapter 4 is about the numbering of the Levites, and chapter 6 goes on to a new topic- the Nazarite vow. We are therefore to understand the three pieces of legislation in Numbers 5 as related to each other. The common theme they all have is

that interpersonal issues must be addressed- the lepers who had been concealed in the camp were to be removed, brethren reconciled with, and unfaithfulness or jealousy issues faced up to and permanently resolved. Time never really heals but rather does it allow issues to fester until major spiritual and inter-personal breakdown occurs. That's one simple and very relevant lesson to take from this chapter.

:2 The fact the people responded by removing such persons from the camp (:3) suggests that those who concealed their skin diseases or the fact they had touched dead relatives had somehow been allowed to remain within the camp. The theme of the chapter is that such private issues must be faced and openly resolved.

:6 *Against the Lord*- But the sins in view were against other members of God' people; v. 7 makes it clear that it was individuals who had been trespassed against. Sin against each other is sin against God; how we treat each other is how we treat God. This sets the scene for the trial of jealousy section which follows. We would expect to read in v. 7 that reconciliation must be achieved with the offended person *and* an offering made to God. But assuming v. 7 refers to an offering to be made only if there was no living person to reconcile with, that is not stated here- because the impression we are left with is that sin against another is sin against God, and reconciliation with man is in that sense reconciliation with God.

:9,10 The emphasis here upon how the priest represented God is to pave the way for the manifestation of God in the priest which we will read of in the next section about the trial of jealousy.

:12 *And commit a trespass against him*- The whole trial of jealousy tends to assume guilt, hence the water is described immediately as "bitter water" (:18), even though the water only *became* bitter if she was guilty (:24). There were various teachings in the Law of Moses about sexual immorality- the woman could have been killed (Lev. 20:10), but the varying options were to encourage thoughtful response. It would be facile to think that there can only be one disciplinary response to sexual failure in the church today. We have options, and the process of choice is to exercise our grace.

:14 Jealousy is not sinful of itself- God portrays Himself as a God jealous over us. It is a function of deep love. The Law of Moses upheld the position of women far more than contemporary legal codes. The man who falsely accused his wife would've been deeply shamed- see on :31. The innocent woman had the promise [or was it a command?] of :28 that she would conceive seed- the greatest honour for any Hebrew woman. As to why the woman had no power to accuse the man- that remains a difficult question, but I would suggest that in a society where polygamy was accepted and even seen as desirable by women [as it is in many parts of Africa today], the fact her husband slept with another woman was not necessarily seen as it is in Western society today. I have personally heard middle aged African women boasting of how many young women their husband gets to sleep with.

:17 *Earthen... dust*- References to the creation of man and woman from the dust. Perhaps this was to serve as a gentle reminder to all involved that we are all but dust.

:18 *Uncover the woman's head*- A woman's hair was seen as her glory, and a covered head was associated with shame. It could be argued that the woman was being treated as innocent until proven guilty, and even invited to openly display her glory.

:19 Many primitive societies have some such ritual. In Islam in such a case, the suspected woman must vow that if she is guilty, then she will die and lose her children, preferably going to Mecca to make the vow. In some African societies, a woman must jump into water etc. The existence of the law of jealousy was therefore a concession to human weakness and psychological need.

:21 *thigh to rot... belly to swell*- This phrase is notoriously difficult to interpret. The NEB seems to get it right in rendering it 'have a miscarriage'. This would appear to be the meaning of the idiom. If the woman was visibly pregnant and her husband wondered how the child could be his, then he would naturally feel jealous. The immorality in view had been hidden from him (:13), so the only reason he would have to doubt her was when she was noticeably pregnant. Most women who are say 4 months pregnant (i.e. visible) carry their pregnancy to term, so the loss of the child would've been seen as the direct curse of God. Women in those days were surely stronger than today, therefore the termination of a pregnancy after four months from natural causes would've been most unusual and seen as God's hand. This of course provides yet another of many windows onto the vexed question of abortion. It was not that the dusty water itself made her lose the child- the loss of the child was from God's hand. And yet it was her husband who was responsible for the decision, because there were a variety of ways prescribed in the Law for dealing with sexual failure. He didn't have to put her through the trial of jealousy- indeed, Hosea did not when Gomer bore Lo-Ammi ['not my people']. He forgave her.

:23 The water *became* bitter only if the woman was guilty (:24). The curses of condemnation were written by the priest [an interesting incidental reference to the literacy of at least some in early Israel]- but removed by the bitter water. The implication could be that condemnation is removed by condemnation; we must face our sins and be condemned for them in this life if we are to be saved from condemnation. If we would condemn ourselves in this life, we shall not be condemned at the last day. The serpent on the pole was a symbol of sin, and yet it was this which leads to our salvation from condemnation. The whole trial of jealousy is often alluded to by God in His jealousy over unfaithful Israel; He promises to "blot out" their sin after they have experienced condemnation (Is. 43:25). The *curses* written in the *book* were to be given to Israel because God was *jealous* (Dt. 29:20); this is another allusion to these laws, showing that God is the ultimately jealous husband of Israel.

:24 *Drink the bitter water*- The water at that stage was only water, it "*became* bitter" to her if she was guilty. There is surely some connection with our drinking the Lord's cup. To drink a cup of wine from the Lord is elsewhere used as a metaphor of condemnation. This is the great paradox of the breaking of bread meeting- by accepting the cup of condemnation, it becomes the cup of blessing to us.

:28 *Shall conceive*- A prophecy or a command? If a command, then this would require her husband to resume relationship with her after his outbreak of baseless jealousy.

:31 What was the man's iniquity? The implication is that if the woman was innocent, then the husband was guilty of sin. But what sin? I can only conclude: 'The sin of slandering someone on the basis of jealousy'. The hint is that until she were proven guilty, then he was guilty of this sin of slander. Only her being proven guilty released him from that guilt. So often, slander is on the basis of jealousy. The legislation ends at this point; there is no demand for a sacrifice from him. If he was genuinely repentant, he could of course offer a freewill offering and seek to obey the spirit of the earlier legislation in this chapter about personal offence against another (:6-8). The silence of the record about this perhaps implies that if a person does create slander against another on the basis of jealousy, then they have to go away and live with that, and there is no specifically prescribed, enforced ritual of atonement for it.

6:2- see on Dt. 6:23

10:12- see on Dt. 33:1

10:29-32 Num. 10 and 11 seem to portray Moses in weakness. He pleads with his brother in law not to leave them, because without him they would not know where to camp in the wilderness; " thou mayest be to us instead of eyes" . Yet the Angels are God's eyes, they were seeking out resting places for Israel in the wilderness; the record reminds us of this straight afterwards (Num. 10:33). Jethro elsewhere suggested that Moses needed more help in leading the people because otherwise fading thou wilt fade away' (Ex. 18:18 A.V.mg.); at the end of his days, the record seems to highlight the untruth of this by commenting that his natural strength was not faded (Dt. 34:7). So Jethro's advice wasn't always spiritual.

Num. 10:31 suggests Moses saw Jethro's knowledge of the desert as better than the Angelic " eyes" of Yahweh (2 Chron. 16:9; Prov. 15:3) who were going ahead of the camp to find a resting place (Num. 10:33 cp. Ex. 33:14 cp. Is. 63:9). It seems Moses recognized his error in this on the last day of his life, when he admits Yahweh, not Jethro's wisdom, had led them (Dt. 1:33). Likewise Paul in his final communication comments on the way that Mark with whom he had once quarrelled was profitable to him (2 Tim. 4:11).

Num. 10:33- see Ps. 132:8

The Angels have worked out every victory for us in prospect- we have to have the faith to go ahead and act, believing that they have acted, even when there is no visible evidence. Our works must therefore repeat those which our Angels have done previously- hence their great interest in us. The Angel brought Israel "forth out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them" (Ez. 20:6); the Angel in the ark "went before them in the three days journey to search out a resting place for them" (Num. 10:33). Yet Israel still had to send out human spies, and carefully "describe the land in a book" (Josh. 18:4-8).

11:5- see on 2 Pet. 2:1

11:10 The time of Num. 10 and 11 was a spiritually low period for Moses. Consider Num. 10:30; 11:11-13,22,23. Yet in these very chapters there seems almost an emphasis on the fact that God was manifest in Moses: "Moses heard the people weep"; but they wept in the ears of Yahweh (Num. 11:10,18); "it displeased the Lord; and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased" (11:1,10) shows the connection between them; God has asked Moses to carry Israel "as a nursing father... unto the land" (11:12), although Yahweh was their father who would carry them to the land (Dt. 32:6; Hos. 11:1). That Yahweh is manifest in His servants *even in their times of weakness* is both comforting and sobering. It is because of this principle that an apostate Israel caused Yahweh's Name *which they carried* to be mocked in the Gentile world (Ez. 20:39; 36:20; 39:7; 43:8). Yahweh did not take that Name away from them the moment they sinned. Having been baptized into the Name, our behaviour in the world, whether they appreciate it or not, is therefore a constant exhibition of the Name.

11:11-15 Moses is depressed by Israel complaining at how boring the manna was. He doubts God's earlier promises to him: "Moses said unto the Lord, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight (God said he had, in Ex.33:17)...have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto them, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child unto the land which thou swearest unto *their* fathers (not "our" - notice the uncharacteristic separation between Moses and Israel). Whence should I give flesh unto all this people...if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, *if* I have found favour in the sight (as God had earlier promised him that he had)" . God was the father and conceiver of Israel, the one who would carry them to the land (Ex. 19:4; 33:15; Dt. 32:11,12; Hos. 11:1); it is as if Moses is saying: They're your children, you look after them, don't dump them on me. Although compare this with his earlier love for them, willing to sacrifice himself for them. God then says that He will provide more food for Israel. But Moses almost mocks God: "Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them?" . And the Angel angrily replied: "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not" . If he had faith, Moses surely would have realised that if God could provide manna, he could provide any food. Moses seems to have suffered from fits of depression and also high spirituality.

Joshua urged Moses to "forbid" or [Heb.] 'imprison' Eldad and Medad for prophesying (Num. 11:28). He fell into the mistake so many have done; shut up or silence a genuine man of God, for fear that the institution, the existing administration, would be undermined. Perhaps they were prophesying of Moses' death? Whatever, Moses' refusal to shut them up seems to indicate an openness to God's Spirit and way of working, even if it threatened to undermine his authority. He shows such a genuine spirit when he replies that he wished that all God's people were the spiritual leaders.

12:1 Moses "took" (not married) another woman, an Ethiopian- probably a slave woman, or possibly a cheap woman. Moses' brother and sister were ashamed that their brother was involved with a woman like this. Whoever she was, Moses was under the one man: one woman standard of the garden of Eden.

12:3 The Hebrew for "meek" means one brought down; he was made meek. The word can also mean 'depressed'.

The man Moses was *made* very meek, until he was the meekest man alive on earth (Num. 12:3 Heb.). "A stuttering shepherd, shy of leadership and haunted by his crime of passion" in slaying the Egyptian...these things developed this in him. Remember that Moses himself wrote this. It's an autobiographical comment, reflecting of course the Spirit of Him who knows every heart, and could make such a statement. And yet he writes it in recording how God had rebuked Aaron and Miriam for criticizing him, and how He had told them that He spoke with Moses alone face to face. We can imagine Moses blushing, with hung head. And then he makes the comment, that he was made the most humble man... Appreciating the honour of seeing so much of God, when he himself was a sinner, was part of that humbling process. All Israel will ultimately go through this when they face up to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Is. 2:10,11). This certainly reads like an allusion to Moses' cowering in the rock, humbling himself in the dust, before the glory of Yahweh. Our glimpses of the wonder of the Father's character should have the same effect upon us, just beholding the glory of God, i.e. the manifestation of His perfect character is Christ, should change us into the same image (2 Cor. 3:18- another invitation to see ourselves as Moses). What a compliment! The most humble man that was then alive; and humility is of great value to God, according to the Proverbs and 1 Pet. 3:4. That the leader of 3 million people for forty years could be the meekest man is a sure wonder. Perhaps this comment is made at this point because Moses weakness in the previous chapter had perhaps further developed his humility. He truly cries unto God to heal Miriam of the punishment she was given for criticising him. See on Ex. 11:3.

God spoke to Moses "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of Yahweh shall he behold" (Num. 12:8) is the basis of 1 Cor. 13:12: "Now (in the period of the Spirit gifts) we see through a glass darkly; but then (in the dispensation of the completed word) face to face: now I know in part (from the ministry of the gifts); but then shall I know, even as also I am known". The point of this connection is simply this: The close relationship between God and Moses is now available to us through the word. But do we feel God speaking to us face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Ex. 33:11)? For this is how close God and Moses came through the word. Yet it is possible. An *urgent* devotion to the word is needed by us as a community. This is what we really need exhortation about.

12:11 Aaron doesn't instinctively pray for his own self-preservation- that the leprosy didn't also break out upon him. Instead he prays for his sister's healing.
lay not the sin upon us... which we sinned- To carry sin therefore is not the same as the sin. To carry sin is to bear the result and consequence of sin. This was what Jesus bore on the cross. Therefore the consequence of every sin is crucifixion, death by torture. And Jesus took this for us.

The description of Miriam in Num.12:12 LXX is quoting from Job 3:16 LXX; as if both Job and Miriam represented apostate Israel.

12:15 The overall progress of God's people is hindered by the unresolved sin of their leadership. This isn't the same as the false notion of 'guilt by association'.

13:18-20 These requests seem to be Moses' weakness or at least, concession to Israel's weakness. God told them to simply search the land, presumably in order to be able to divide it up for conquest and inheritance. Moses instead asks the spies to assess whether the land is good or not, how strong the opposition will be, etc. And this weakness was the undoing of Israel. Indeed Dt. 1:22 says that Israel asked God to send out the spies before them- even though God had promised that the Angel in the pillar of cloud would go ahead of them. God grants such concessions to human weakness, but making use of them often leads us into greater openness to temptation and likelihood of failure.

Time and again in the Biblical record, Abraham is held up as a very real example, in whose steps all God's people are to tread. For example, as Abraham was bidden leave Ur and go and "see" the "land" of promise which God would "give" him (Gen. 13:15), so the spies were told to go and "see" the "land" which God had "given" them (Num. 13:18; 32:8,9- the same three words as in the promises to Abraham)- yet they lacked the faith of Abraham to believe that really, they could possess that land. They did "see" the land, yet they were punished by being told that they would not now "see the land" (Num. 14:23; Dt. 1:35). They saw it, but they didn't "see" it with the eyes of Abraham. And so it can be with our vision of God's Kingdom. Remember that Moses was the author of both Genesis and Numbers- such connections aren't incidental. Moses wished the people to see themselves as going forward in the spirit of Abraham- and hence he wrote up the Genesis record for Israel's benefit an inspiration.

13:33 They made the common mistake of assuming that our view of ourselves is how others also see us.

14:3 They recognized the Lord had brought them out of Egypt. Their lack of faith was not the same as atheism, rather was it a lack of faith in the possibilities of the God they believed in.

14:11 *Provoke*- The idea is to scorn, to blaspheme, and this is what we do to God if we doubt we shall inherit the Kingdom. The language used about Israel's lack of faith is extreme. They "despised" the land (:32) even though it seems they didn't doubt it was a good land, they just doubted whether they could. They gathered together against God (:35). The language all shows that the most fatal error is to not believe we will be saved- this is far and more fundamentally worse than any sin of hot blood.

14:11- see on Jn. 12:37.

14:12 *Disinherit*- This is the same word translated "inherit" or "possess" in 13:30 and 14:24. The word also means 'to destroy'. We are God's inheritance- we are to be totally devoted to Him. If we don't want to be, then He will inherit / destroy us anyway. This is the logic of total devotion- we are devoted to Him, and must willingly go along with this or else He will destroy us. The idea is alluded to in 14:22- because God's glory must fill the earth, therefore the sinners would be destroyed. And again in 14:33,35 we read of the sinners being "consumed", a Hebrew word meaning to be perfected or even cleansed.

Greater... mightier nation- The same three words used of how God would make Abraham's seed a great and mighty nation (Gen. 18:18). God was alluding to that intention, but saying that He could cease fulfilling it the way He had been working on, and do it another way- through Moses. They

would then have become as He intended- a nation of Levites. God's purposes are therefore open ended to some extent.

14:24- see on Ex. 32:17,18.

14:27 As if God needed someone to talk with, to share His feelings of frustration...

14:28 *In My ears*- But the people thought they were only quietly murmuring (:27). God hears our inaudible grumbings and faithless doubts, just as He did Sarah's.

14:33 Their concern about their children being killed by the Canaanites was only an excuse- their children ended up bearing their sins, i.e. bearing the consequence of them. The figure of 'carrying iniquity' means 'carrying the consequence of sin'; which is what the Lord did on the cross. Others suffer the consequence of our sin; and the consequence of sin can be carried by Jesus.

14:34- see on Heb. 3:9-11

Num. 14:42,44: "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you. . but they presumed to go up. . nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the Lord (which the Angel had made with them) departed not"- as if to imply that the Lord (the Angel) was in the ark, and therefore did not go up with them because the ark did not. See on Ps. 78:60

16:5- see on 2 Tim. 2:24,25

16:11- see on Num. 26:9

16:13,14- see on Acts 7:39

Num. 16:19 describes "the common death of all men" as being "visited after the visitation of all men"; visiting is very much Angelic language, and thus indicates that an Angel consciously causes a man to die (by taking his breath away).

16:28- see on Jn. 5:19; Jn. 8:28

Num. 16:28 LXX: "Moses said, Hereby ye shall *know* that the Lord hath *sent me to do all these works*; for I have not done them *of myself*". The ideas of *know*, *sent me*, *do these works*, *not of myself* are so frequent in John: Jn. 13:35; 8:28,42; 7:3,28; 5:30,36; 10:25,37; 14:10; 15:24; 17:4.

16:44-50 God again wants to destroy Israel and make of Moses' family a new people. Again, for the third time, Moses knows God well enough, he has enough faith, enough humility and enough true love for Israel to ask God- successfully- to relent from this. That God wanted to do this three times shows His great love for Moses.

17:5- see on Num. 26:9

Israel "chode with Moses...they strove with the Lord" (Num. 20:3,13) uses the same Hebrew word for both "chode" and "strove". To strive with Moses was to strive with the Lord- i.e. with the guardian Angel that was so closely associated with Moses? Num. 20:4 continues rather strangely with the Israelites addressing Moses in the plural: "The people chode with Moses, saying...Why have ye [you plural] brought up...". Could it be that even they recognized his partnership with God?

Likewise Num. 21:5: "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye [plural] brought us up out of Egypt to die?".

Note carefully the process of failure here. Moses and Aaron were told to *both* speak to the rock, and this would result in Moses personally bringing forth water: "Gather thou [singular] the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye [plural- both of them] unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou [Moses personally] shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink" (Num. 20:8). But Moses seems to have dismissed Aaron's intended involvement and assumed that he alone could bring the water out with his rod. Yet Aaron was also condemned for this incident- presumably because he didn't speak to the rock but just let Moses smite the rock with his silence meaning consent.

20:9- see on Ex. 17:6

20:12 Moses' faith slips for a moment; his spirit is provoked by Israel, so that he speaks unadvisedly with his lips and is therefore barred from entering the land (although maybe such an apparently temporary slip was the reflection of deeper problems?). Yet it does seem uncharacteristic, a tragic slip down the graph of ever rising spirituality. There must have almost been tears in Heaven. Being easily provoked was one of Moses' characteristics; consider how he *turned himself* and stormed out from Pharaoh (Ex. 10:6; 11:8); how his anger waxed hot when he returned from the mount, how he went out from Pharaoh in great anger, how he first of all feared the wrath of Pharaoh and then stopped fearing it; how Moses was "very wroth" at Israel's suggestion that he was appropriating the sacrifices for himself; how he was "angry" with Eleazer (Ex.32:19; 11:8; Num. 16:15; Lev. 10:16,17). This temperament explains his swings of faith. Was the Lord Jesus likewise afflicted?

The style of Moses' writing in Num. 20:12-14 reveals a submerging of his own pain. He speaks of himself in the third person, omitting any personal reflection on his own feelings: "The Lord spake unto Moses...Because ye believed me not...ye shall not bring the congregation into the land...and Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the King of Edom..." . Likewise all the references to "the Lord spake unto Moses" (Lev. 1:1). Moses submerged his own personality in writing his books. See on Acts 7:39.

20:18 These words were said with hearts melting with fear of Israel (Ex. 15:16).

21:5- see on 20:3

21:7 The people again complain, and God punishes them with serpents; Moses' prayer for them is accepted. These prayers for others' salvation must have required intense faith and acceptability to be heard.

22:22-27- see on Job 19:8

It would seem that the natural creation may see the Angels when they are invisible to us- thus Balaam's donkey saw the Angel standing in the way and was too frightened by the realness of it to go further (Num. 22:25). This was to teach Balaam that he ought to have seen the Angelic presence at work without having his eyes specially opened to see the Angel, in the same way as the ass didn't need it's eyes opened to see the Angel.

His eyes were opened to the Angel blocking his way, and when he realized how he had closed his spiritual vision to the Angel trying to stop him going to Balak, he fell down on his face (Num. 22:31). But when he is later given a vision of Balak's judgment, the vision which Balaam didn't want to see, he describes himself as "the man whose eye was closed" and yet had to see the vision with his eyes open (Num. 24:3,4 RV). He didn't learn the lesson. He closed his eyes so as not to see the vision, and yet God forced him to open his eyes and see it. And again, he fell down upon his face (Num. 24:4,16 RV), as he had when the Angel blocked his path earlier. He wouldn't learn his lesson, he wouldn't perceive how circumstances were being repeated in God's desperate effort to get him to repent.

Imputed righteousness is the key to our salvation by grace. When Balaam tried to curse Israel, it was impossible because God saw them as righteous, even though they were not: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness (Jacob-ness) in Israel" (Num. 23:21). God overlooked Jacob's natural characteristics. It is no accident that God repeatedly described His people at this time with the title of 'Jacob' (Num. 23:7,10,21,23; 24:5,17,19).

24:5 The repeated parallel of Jacob and Israel was to reflect how God imputed righteousness to the historical Jacob, changing his name in recognition of it, and He was doing the same to Israel's people.

24:6 The repeated use of the idea of "as" was perhaps to reflect how God saw them- as if they were righteous. Mic. 6:4,5 records God's response to Balak and Balaam is a parade example of His saving grace to Israel, which was intended to encourage the Israel of Micah's day. Hos. 9:10 speaks of this time- God "found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first ripe in the fig tree at its first season; but they came to Baal Peor, and consecrated themselves to the shameful thing". God saw them *as if* they were so wonderful- but they turned to worship Baalpeor (Num. 25:3). Our response to imputed righteousness must not be the same.

Planted- This is an image frequently used about how God would plant His people permanently in Canaan, and the figure is sometimes used along with the idea of 'never to be removed' (Ex. 15:17; 2 Sam. 7:10; Ps. 44:2; 80:8,15; Is. 5:2; Jer. 2:21). As Yahweh planted the garden of Eden, so He speaks here of how He had already planted His people- the first step towards a potential restoration of Eden (Gen. 2:8). But the reality was that at the time Balaam was speaking, the people of Israel were in tents, waiting to enter the land. But God saw them as if they were already there and established- just as He sees us even in our wilderness years as His Kingdom, even though it is not yet literally established.

24:7 *His King*- Israel's King. There is here an intimation that Israel's seed and king- Messiah- would have personal conflict with 'Gog', a leader of a coalition of surrounding nations. Throughout the chapter, a total of nine Arab nations are mentioned, under the leadership of a tenth individual- Agag / Gog. Such victories never happened in Israel's history because they failed to live up to the potential power they were given in this prophecy, but the essence will come true in Messiah's latter day victories against another group of 9 Arab nations headed up by a Gog / Agag figure, as outlined in Ez. 38. See on :24.

Agag- A generic name for the kings of Amalek, rather like 'Abimelech', 'Caesar' or 'Pharaoh'.

24:8 The shame was that God saw Israel as triumphing over their enemies- but instead, they were beguiled by them, slept with their women and worshipped their idols. They were to "pierce them

through with [their] arrows" - and Phinehas therefore pierced through the Midianite woman with a javelin (Num. 25:8).

24:9 The past tenses suggest God saw Israel as already having entered and possessed Canaan; He likens them to a lion which couched down before it sprung in to Canaan and destroyed the tribes. But the sad record of Joshua and Judges is that Israel feared their enemies and were oppressed by them. The great potential didn't come true. It was so sad for God, and is the understandable basis for His anger in chapter 25 when Israel did the very opposite and joined themselves in sexual and moral submission to the Baal of Peor.

24:13 Clearly Balaam really wanted the promised reward from Balak. He wanted God to curse Israel; Dt. 23:5 and Josh. 24:10 state that God did not hear Balaam's prayers about this. But there is no record that he prayed to God to curse Israel. But clearly his unspoken desires were read by God as a prayer, just as Elijah's feelings about Israel were read as his making intercession to God against Israel. Likewise our ability to verbalize is not the same as ability in prayer. Our deepest, unspoken feelings are seen by God as prayer. Neh. 13:2 goes so far as to say that God turned Balaam's curse into a blessing- implying Balaam's thoughts were read by God as asking Him to curse Israel. See on 25:11.

24:17 *A star*- The wise men said that they had seen the star of the King of Israel and were following it- they were clearly alluding to this prophecy, and the Star was therefore ultimately the Lord Jesus.

Arise out of Israel- The future king was to be totally out of Israel, an Israelite indeed. This is an eloquent prophecy of the Lord's human nature and lack of any personal pre-existence. Likewise :19, He was to "arise out of Jacob".

24:18 Despite occasional victories against these powers, Israel never possessed them and they revolted against Israel repeatedly (under Solomon, 1 Kings 11:14; Joram, 2 Kings 8:20; Ahaz, 2 Chron. 28:17 and during the Babylonian invasion, Ez. 35:15; Obad. 10,13). Yet total dominion over them was potentially possible for Israel.

24:24 Ships sailing from Cyprus sounds like the Philistines- but it was Babylon and not the Philistines which destroyed Assyria. This was therefore a potential scenario of victory against the surrounding nations which could've come true- but the events of chapter 25 meant that it didn't happen. However, the essence of the prophecy will be fulfilled in the last days- see on :7.

24:25 Balaam figured that if Israel sinned against their God, then the prophecies of blessing and victory would not come true. He understood prophecy as conditional. He advised Balak to tempt Israel to commit fornication with the pagan gods so that the prophecies would not come true (Num. 31:16; Rev. 2:14). Balaam is seen as the prototypical false teacher *within Israel* in 2 Pet. 2:15 and Jude 11. It could be that he entered the camp of Israel and told them the prophecies he had been inspired to make- and this would explain the [human] source of this material which Moses incorporated in Numbers- and having gotten their confidence, then encouraged them to commit fornication with Moab. This rings true, in that then Balaam was exactly prototypical of the false prophets *within the first century Israel of God* who were also teaching the new Israel to commit

fornication and worship idols, having credibility because they had also uttered true prophecies.

25:2 *Bowed down*- But Israel were potentially *above* the Midianites (24:7,18); the Midianites vexed *them* (25:18) when Israel had been prophesied as vexing *them* (hence they were told to now *vex* the Midianites in :17).

25:11 Phinehas "executed judgment and the plague was stayed" (Ps. 106:30). The Hebrew for "executed judgment" is the same word more usually translated to pray or intreat. His actions were understood by God as a prayer, just as our actions and situations can be understood as a prayer- see on 24:13.

24:3- see on 22:31

24:16- see on 22:31

25:3- see on 2 Cor. 6:14

Israel's rejection of Moses was a rejection of the God who was working through Moses to redeem them. Thus Korah and his followers "strove against Moses... when they strove against Yahweh" (Num. 26:9 cp. 16:11). Moses understood that when Israel murmured against him, they murmured against Yahweh (Ex. 16:2,7; Num. 17:5; 21:5). They *thrust* Moses *away* from them (Acts 7:27,39) - yet the same word is used in Rom. 11:2 concerning how God still has not *cast away* Israel; He has not treated them as they treated Him through their rejection of Moses and Jesus, who manifested Him.

27:12- see on Jn. 3:3,5

27:16,17 Moses did not get bitter at his rejection, nor disinterested in Israel's future because he would not be with them in the land. He asked God to provide a replacement for him.

Num. 27:20 LXX says that Moses put or gave of his glory upon Joshua- and this passage is alluded to by the Lord in Jn. 17:22: "The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them". Note that the Lord's prayer of John 17 is full of allusion to Moses. So the disciples, indeed all those for whom the Lord prayed in His prayer, are to see themselves as Joshua. Further, in the same context, the Lord washed the disciples' feet. This would've been understood by the disciples as an allusion to a well known Jewish legend that in Num. 27:15-23, Moses acted as a servant to Joshua by preparing a basin of water and washing Joshua's feet. And the LXX of Moses' final charge to Joshua in Dt. 31:7,8 ["fear not, neither be dismayed"] is quoted by the Lord to His disciples in Jn. 14:1,27.

In Num. 32 the Gaddites and Reubenites were reprimanded for not going over Jordan into Canaan because they were not literally following the Lord- the Angel that had physically gone over in front of them. Moses stresses four times (v. 20,21,27,29) that they should go over armed "before the Lord". They were to at least show willing to fight in order to do their part in gaining possession of what the Angel had already done for them- "until He (the Angel) hath driven out His enemies from before Him" (v. 21). Notice He does not say 'until you have driven them out with your own sword', although they were to go over armed. See on Dt. 13:17; Josh. 22:2-4.

33:1 Israel moved only 33 times in the first 39 years of wandering, meaning that they stayed on average for over a year in each of their resting places. Yet in the fortieth, final year, Israel moved nine times- and at least eight of those moves were in the last seven months of the fortieth year (:38). The tempo of God's activity increases towards the end of our lives and in the final entry period into God's Kingdom during the tribulation. The tempo is also strong at the start of our journey- the first nine stops on the journey were relatively soon after leaving Egypt, within the first year.

:2 Heb: "Moses recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by the Lord; their marches, by starting point, were as follows". Each stage of the journey [Heb. 'departure'] was a starting point- each day is the first day of the rest of our lives. Israel perhaps wanted to move on from a sense of boredom, a desire for something new- just as many do today, kidding themselves that this is a spiritual 'journey'. For those truly on a journey to the Kingdom, our moving on is "at the commandment of the Lord" (Ex. 17:1).

"Goings out" suggests that each stage of our journey, even if it at times seems two steps back and three forward, is in fact a 'going out' from Egypt. And yet we know from Acts 7 and Ez. 20 that Israel took the idols of Egypt with them and in their hearts turned *back* to Egypt (Acts 7:39), even though the external journey was a going out, away from Egypt. And so our church life can have the same semblance, whilst in our hearts we have turned back.

33:2 God wanted Moses to record the journey so that Israel could recount it when they entered the land: "You shall remember [Heb. 'to recount', to mark] all the way which Yahweh your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not" (Dt. 8:2). The command to recount the way was perhaps a command to recite Numbers 33. In the type, it may well be that in the Kingdom age we look back on this brief life so that we never forget 'how we got here'. What may seem now an endless chasing of our tails in a desert we will then perceive to have been purposeful strides towards the Kingdom. There *is* meaning attached to event in our lives, even if we will only perceive that meaning when the record is written up.

33:53 dispossess- s.w. 'possess' later in the verse [AV "the inhabitants of" isn't in the original]. They were to possess the land because God had given them the land- we are to inherit the Kingdom because God has given it to us to inherit. Believing that God has really given us the Kingdom and accepting this is so hard to do.

33:54 Shall be in the place- they were not to seek to exchange or amend the lot given them. There is an element to which our lives, our talents, our portion of intended service and inheritance is from God- and yet we so often seek to change this.

1:23 In this time of final spiritual maturity, Moses was keenly aware of his own spiritual failings (as Paul and Jacob were in their last days). This is one of the great themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. He begins his Deuteronomy address by pointing out how grievously they had failed thirty eight years previously, when they refused to enter the good land. He reminds them how that although God had gone before them in Angelic power (Dt. 1:30,33), they had asked for their spies to go before them.

And Moses admits that this fatal desire for human strength to lead them to the Kingdom " pleased me well" (Dt. 1:23). It seems to me that here Moses is recognizing his own failure. Perhaps he is even alluding to his weakness in wanting Jethro to go before them " instead of eyes" , in place of the Angel-eyes of Yahweh (Num. 10:31-36). Moses at the end was aware of his failures. And yet he also shows his thorough appreciation of the weakness of his people. Moses admits at the end that Israel's faithless idea to send out spies "pleased me well"- when it shouldn't have done (Dt. 1:23,32,33). He realized more and more his own failure as he got older.

1:33- see on Num. 10:31

1:36 Joshua and Caleb were earlier characterized by the comment that they "wholly followed the Lord" when they went to spy out Canaan (Num. 14:24; 32:11,12; Dt. 1:36; Josh. 14:8,9,14), and urged Israel to go up and inherit it. This refers to the way that the Angel had gone ahead of them, and they faithfully followed where the Angel had gone, and believed that Israel could follow that Angel wherever it led. When Israel finally did go into the land, they were told that Joshua would 'go before' them, and they were to follow him and thereby inherit the land (Dt. 31:3). From this we see that circumstances repeat in our lives.

Moses truly was made spiritually strong out of weakness. His faith fluctuated, until at last he came to a spiritual height at the end of his life. He was willing to give his physical and eternal life for Israel's salvation (Ex. 32:32). In a sense, his desire was heard. Because of the sin of a moment, caused by the provocation of the people he loved, God decreed that he could not enter the land of promise. *For their sakes* he was barred from the land; this is the emphasis of the Spirit (Dt. 1:37; 3:26; 4:21); and Ps. 106:32,33 says that Moses was provoked to sin because Israel angered God, and that *therefore* " it went ill with Moses for their sakes" . Truly, God works through sinful man to achieve His glory. Thus Moses says that he must die "Because ye [plural] trespassed against me" (Dt. 32:51). This all helps explain why Christ had to die, apart from the fact that he was mortal. He died the death of a sinner for our salvation, he felt all the emotions of the rejected, the full weight of God's curse; for " cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" in crucifixion (Gal. 3:13). We have seen that Moses is a superb and accurate type of the Lord Jesus. Therefore Moses in his time of dying must grant us insight into the death of our Lord, the prophet like him (Dt. 18:18). See on Ex. 32:32

Dt. 1:38 states clearly that "Joshua...he shall cause Israel to inherit [s.w. possess]" the land. Yet by the end of Joshua's life, Israel were not inheriting the land in totality. He didn't live up to his potential.

1:41- see on Jn. 14:1,2

Moses seems to express his own weakness in his final speeches to Israel in Deuteronomy. He recalls how even towards the end of the wilderness journey, God told him to contend with Sihon in battle (Dt. 2:24); and yet Moses admits: "I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the highway, I will turn neither unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me food for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only let me pass through on my feet" (Dt. 2:26-28). And yet God by grace to Moses hardened Sihon's heart so that there was a battle in which, again by grace, he gave Israel victory.

3:2,3- see on Ex. 34:27

3:20- see on Josh. 22:2-4

He had promised Reuben and Manasseh that they could return to their possessions only when the others had possessed the land (Dt. 3:20). This condition never happened- yet they were allowed to return. And our very salvation from death and the consequences of sin is in a sense another example of this kind of grace.

Moses asked at least twice (maybe three times?) for him to be allowed to enter the land (Dt. 3:25; Ps. 90); but the answer was basically the same as to Paul when he asked for his thorn in the flesh to be removed: " My grace is sufficient for thee" . The fact Moses had been forgiven and was at one with his God was so great that his physical entering the land was irrelevant. And for Paul likewise, temporal blessings in this life are nothing compared to the grace of forgiveness which we have received (Ex. 34:9).

3:26- see on 1:37

He pleaded with them to " take heed to thyself" that they kept God's word and taught it to their children, so that they would enter the land (Dt. 4:1,9). These words are alluded to by Paul in 1 Tim.4:16, where he says that attention to the doctrine of the new covenant will likewise save us and those who hear us.

Moses uses the name " Yahweh" over 530 times, often with some possessive adjective, e.g. " Yahweh *thy God*" or " Yahweh *our God*" . He saw the personal relationship between a man and his God. Jacob reached a like realization at his peak. The idea of 'cleaving' to God is also a big theme of Moses in Deuteronomy (4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:4,17; 28:21,60; 30:20); the only other time Moses uses the word in his writings is in Gen. 2:24, concerning a man cleaving to his wife. Moses seems to have been suggesting to Israel that their covenant relationship with God meant they were *marrying God*. This was a real paradigm breaker. We may be used to such things. But against the theological background of the time, not to say the generally low level of spirituality among Israel, this was a shocking idea. It reflected the heights to which Moses had risen.

4:7 *So near-* s.w. kinsman. God was as a kinsman to Israel. No other God was able to be this close and therefore this close to being human as Yahweh. A relative was seen in those days as one who would provide for you, redeem you, stand up for you, one you could always turn to. And God was Israel's kinsman *par excellence*. It is thrice emphasized that Israel were a "great nation" because of this closeness of their God (Dt. 4:6-8). The Hebrew term "great nation" is at the foundation of the promises to Abraham which form the new covenant. Through the seed [the Lord Jesus] "I will make of you a great nation" (Gen. 12:2; 18:18). God had earlier told Moses that He would destroy Israel and make of Moses a "great nation" (Ex. 32:10; Num. 14:12); but Moses had successfully pleaded with God not to do so and to continue His attempt to make Israel the intended "great nation". So all Moses' references here to Israel as a "great nation" are a reflection of his own desire that they would come to this status. But their greatness was in having God so close to them. Moses himself had known God very near to him, had spoken with God and heard God's voice- he had experienced the 'greatness' of the relationship God intended with all His people. But Israel preferred not to hear

God's voice direct, they moved away from the possible intimacy, and preferred instead a human mediator and system of religion interposing between God and man.

The Lord Jesus speaking of "The Angels of God in Heaven" (Mt. 22:30) suggests that they spend a fair proportion of their time located there physically. God 'comes near' whenever we call upon Him (Dt. 4:7 RV). Perhaps this refers to an Angel literally being sent out from Heaven to come near to us in working out the answer to our prayer. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

4:9- see on Ex. 23:20

4:9 take heed. Despite such great love for Israel, Moses knew them so well that he fully appreciated that they were extremely prone to weakness. This is one of the major themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. He did not turn a blind eye to their sins; Deuteronomy is punctuated with reminders of how grievously they had sinned during their journey. Time and again he comments on how easily they will be tempted to disobey commandments. "Take heed" runs like a refrain throughout Moses' speech.

4:9 Time and again, Moses speaks of the state of their *heart*. He warns them against allowing a bad state of heart to develop, he speaks often of how apostasy starts in the heart. Moses makes a total of 49 references to the heart / mind of Israel in Deuteronomy, compared to only 13 in the whole of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. This indicates the paramount importance which our Lord attaches to the state of our *mind*. This was perhaps his greatest wish as he faced death; that we should develop a spiritual *mind* and thereby manifest the Father and come to salvation. Moses likewise saw the state of our mind as the key to spiritual success. But do we share this perspective? Do we guard our minds against the media and influence of a mind-corrupting world?

The LXX uses the word *ekklesia* eight times in Deuteronomy, but not once in Moses' other words (Dt. 4:10; 9:10; 18:16; 23:1,2,3,8; 32:1). Responsibility for the whole family God had redeemed was a mark of his maturity. It is observable that both as a community and as individuals, this will be a sign of our maturity too. The following are just some aspects of his relationship with Israel.

Dt. 4:11 (see A. V. mg.) states that the Mount burning with fire when Moses ascended it was due to the pillar of fire standing there, appearing to reach to the "midst of Heaven", showing Heaven and earth were connected through this manifestation. The Angel led them through the wilderness, and elsewhere we read that the pillar of fire led them; the conclusion is therefore that the pillar of fire was where the Angel dwelt. Thus the Angel literally "went before" them as God promised it would, in the form of the pillar. Angels are elsewhere associated with pillars of fire, e. g. the one which came to Manoah, and not least in that God came down in a pillar of fire to speak to Moses. Ex. 14:19 conclusively shows the pillar of fire/cloud and the Angel to be identical: "the Angel of God which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud (the Shekinah glory) went from before their face, and stood behind them".

4:12 The fact they saw no similitude is sandwiched between two statements that they heard God's word. The idea surely is that they were the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26) and God's

intention was to fashion them through His word into His moral image. Instead, they rejected this closeness to God by wanting to turn Him into a similitude, an idol, creating Him as a "likeness" of something familiar (:16-18). God's likeness is to be found in us who are made in His physical image and transformed by His word into His moral image. He has no other likeness apart from in and through us. His closeness to us is amazing.

Dt. 4:19 warns Israel not to worship the stars, because God has shared them with "all the peoples under the whole heaven" (RV)- but He Has shared Himself only with Israel. Because of this unique and awesome entrance into their lives by God, they ought to have naturally separated themselves from any other god. The positive separation *unto* naturally resulted in the negative separation *from*.

4:20 In the eternity of the Kingdom, we will be God's inheritance (Dt. 4:20; 9:29), and He will be ours (Ps. 16:5). This mutuality between God and His people is a common theme.

4:21 The love of Moses for Israel as reflected in his final address to them in Deuteronomy, his knowledge of them, his sensitivity to their weakness, his constant desire for them to be spiritually strong and to enter the land; God's respect of him at the end of his life, shown in his burial and in subsequent comments about him. Although Moses is at a spiritual peak in Deuteronomy, he does repeatedly comment- almost under his breath as it were- that he was not going to enter the land "for your sakes", and that he was thereby bearing the anger of God against Israel (e.g. Dt. 4:21 etc.). Whilst in a sense this was true, God's anger was against Moses personally regarding the sin of striking the rock. Given that "that rock was Christ", his inappropriate striking of it was some kind of symbolic crucifixion of Christ. He was in the wrong- the record of the event makes that clear. And yet at the end of his life, Moses is blaming Israel for his sin and his exclusion from the land. Perhaps he was indicating his understanding of how his prayer to not enter the land for their sakes was being answered. On the other hand, one could argue that even on the last day of his life, Moses never came to terms with that sin, sought to justify himself in the eyes of Israel, to shift the blame... and yet even then, God's grace was big enough to accept him. Quite how to score Moses on this point will always be debatable, but the exercise certainly provokes a lot of introspection about our own attitudes to public confession of sin, both in ourselves and in others, and its relationship to God's ultimate acceptance of a person.

4:21- see on 1:37

4:31- see on 31:17

4:33 No other God came so close to His people to speak to them directly. The tragedy was that Israel asked that God *not* do this, and speak with them through Moses. They wanted to interpose a religious system between God and themselves for fear of facing up to the awesome reality of personal relationship with God. And so it has ever been amongst 'religious' people.

4:34 *Tried*- The Hebrew word means just that. God tried, He attempted, to take Israel out of Egypt and make them His own loyal people- just as He tries, unsuccessfully, with so many today. In this we see the limitation of God, albeit self-imposed, due to His huge respect for human freewill. No other God tried [and tries] so hard to bring His people out from Egypt [the world] to be solely His. Every

Red Sea / baptism deliverance of an individual is the sum of a huge amount of work from God. Those who were raised as believers need not think this to be irrelevant to them.

:40 *Prolong your days*- So was long life promised to the obedient Israelite under the Old Covenant? Solomon observed that a just man perished young and "a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness" (Ecc. 7:15). Ez. 12:22 suggests that faithless Israel cynically observed that "The days are prolonged" and God's prophetic word of condemnation had failed- implying they thought that prolonged days were being experienced by them despite their disobedience. The Hebrew phrase 'to prolong days' is found in Is. 53:10, where it is applied to how Messiah would 'prolong His days' not in this life, but in the resurrection. The repeated promises recorded in Deuteronomy of prolonged days upon the land of Israel would therefore hint at the eternity of the Kingdom rather than this life. Indeed, Dt. 4:40 says they would prolong their days "for ever". For an individual Israelite might be faithful but not prolong his or her days in the land because the whole people were to be carried away captive for their sins and the land given to a Gentile power. The opposite of 'days being prolonged' was 'utter destruction' (:26)- which would then speak of condemnation in the second death. This is one of many examples of where eternal life was possible under the Old Covenant- there were multiple different possibilities and plans God could have worked by. Israel could have accepted the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and not killed Him, and so forth. It seems the closer we probe God's word, the more open He is revealed as being.

4:42 Moses was so sensitive to Israel's weakness. He often reminds them that he knows that they will turn away from the Covenant he had given them (e.g. Dt. 30:1; 31:29). He knew that one day they would want a king, even though God was their king (Dt. 17:14). He foresaw how they would see horses and chariots and get frightened (Dt. 20:1-4). He knew that there would always be poor people in the land, even though if the Law was properly kept this would not be the case (Dt. 15:4mg, 11). He knew they would accidentally commit murder and would need a way of escape; therefore he twice repeats and explains the law concerning the cities of refuge (Dt. 4:42; 19:5). These being a symbol of the future Messiah (Heb. 6:18), this emphasis would suggest that like Paul and Jacob, the mind of Moses in his time of spiritual maturity was firmly fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ. See on 5:22

Moses himself realised the extent to which God saw him as representative of Israel; thus he told Israel: " The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord" (Dt. 5:4,5). This is similar to Christ saying that because he had spoken God's words to us, we have seen God (Jn. 14:8). It was Moses who saw God face to face (Ex. 33:11), yet he knew he was so representative of Israel that in reality *they* had seen God face to face. All the honours and glory given to Moses were thereby given to Israel *if they identified themselves with him*. And ditto for us and the Lord Jesus.

The way Moses sees Israel as far more righteous than they were reflects the way the Lord imputes righteousness to us. He says that Israel didn't go near the mountain because they were afraid of the fire (Dt. 5:5), whereas Ex. 19:21-24 teaches that Israel at that time were not so afraid of the fire, and were quite inclined to break through the dividing fence and gaze in unspiritual fascination at a theophany which was beyond them.

When he commented about the commandments that God “added no more” (Dt. 5:22), he foresaw his people’s tendency to add the Halacahs of their extra commandments... He could foresee the spiritual problems they would have in their hour by hour life, he appreciated how both their nature and their disobedience would be such a problem for them, and Moses foresaw that they would not cope well with it (ditto for our Lord Jesus). See on 4:42.

Moses really wanted Israel's well-being, he saw so clearly how obedience would result in blessing (e.g. Dt. 6:3; 12:28). This is a major theme of Moses in Deuteronomy. There was therefore a real sense of pleading behind his frequent appeal for Israel to "hear" God's words. "Hear, O Israel" must have had a real passion behind it in his voice, uncorrupted as it was by old age. He didn't rattle it off as some kind of Sunday School proof. At least four times Moses interrupts the flow of his speech with this appeal: "Hear, O Israel" (Dt. 5:1; 6:3,4; 9:1; 20:3). And again, a glance through a concordance shows how often in Deuteronomy Moses pleads with them to hear God's voice. So he was back to his favourite theme: Hear the word, love the word, make it your life. For in this is your salvation. And the Lord Jesus (e.g. in passages like Jn. 6) makes just the same urgent appeal.

6:5 Some time, read through the book of Deuteronomy in one or two goes. You'll see many themes of Moses in Deuteronomy. It really shows how Moses felt towards Israel, and how the Lord Jesus feels towards us, and especially how he felt towards us just before his death. For this is what the whole book prefigures. . "Love" and the idea of love occurs far more in Deuteronomy than in the other books of the Law. "Fear the Lord thy God" of Exodus becomes "love the Lord thy God" in Deuteronomy.

6:5 Statistical analysis of the word "love" in the Pentateuch likewise reveals that "love" was a great theme of Moses at the end of his life (Moses uses it 16 times in Deuteronomy, and only four times in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers).

Dt. 6:12 shows that the Israelites were encouraged to conceive of God as the manifestation He gave them through their guardian Angel, in the same way as we can relate to God Himself by perceiving His manifestation through the guardian Angel we have; they were told "Beware lest thou forget the LORD thy God which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt (the Angel did that). . the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you (cp. the language concerning the Angel which was to journey among them in Ex. 23, and the declaration of one of that Angels' attributes as "jealous" in Ex. 34). . ye shall not tempt the LORD thy God (God Himself can't be tempted- therefore this is concerning the Angel). . ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD thy God and His testimonies which He hath commanded thee (the Angel gave Moses the Laws on Mount Sinai, as stressed in Hebrews). . that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers (the Angels made the promises), to cast out all thine enemies from before thee (the Angels did this, as we saw earlier). . the LORD showed signs and wonders upon Egypt (the "Angels of evil" did this). . He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers (all these three things were done by the Angel)".

"Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God" (Dt. 6:16). GOD himself cannot be tempted (James 1:13-15); thus this command must be about the Angel. And this was exactly how Jesus interpreted the passage when He quoted it in the wilderness temptations, to prove that one must not mis-use Angelic help by tempting the Angels to hold Him up if He jumped from the temple.

Having stated that the Canaanite tribes would only be cast out if Israel were obedient, Moses goes on to enthuse that those tribes would indeed be cast out- so positive was he about Israel's obedience (Dt. 6:18,19; 7:1). And yet on the other hand he realistically was aware of their future failures. He said those positive words genuinely, because he simply loved Israel, and had the hope for them which love carries with it. Throughout his speech, Moses is *constantly* thinking of Israel in the land; he keeps on telling them how to behave when they are there, encouraging them to be strong so that they will go into the land. I estimate that about 25% of the verses in Moses' speech speak about this. Israel's future inheritance of the Kingdom absolutely filled Moses' mind as he faced up to his own death. And remember that his speech was the outpouring of 40 years meditation. Their salvation, them in the Kingdom, totally filled his heart. And likewise with the Lord Jesus. Psalms 22 and 69 shows how his thoughts on the cross, especially as he approached the point of death, were centred around our salvation. And Moses was so positive about them. "The Lord thy God *shall* bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands", even though these blessings were conditional upon their obedience. Moses was this confident of them (Dt. 16:15 cp. 28:1,4,12).

The meaning of 'holiness' is both to be separated *from* and separated *unto*. Separation isn't only something negative; it's more essentially something positive. We are separated *from* this world because we are separated *unto* the things of God's Kingdom; the separation *from* is a natural, unpretended outcome of our involvement in the things of God's Kingdom. It's not part of a cross which the believer must reluctantly, sacrificially bare. Like all spiritual growth, it is unaffected; the number of hours spent watching t.v. goes down (to zero?) *naturally*; the friendships with the world *naturally* frizzle out, the way we dress, the things we hope for and talk about... all these things will alter in their own time. Israel were brought out from Egypt through the Red Sea (cp. baptism) that they might be *brought in* to the land of promise (Dt. 6:23). The Nazarite was separated *from* wine, because he was separated *unto* the Lord (Num. 6:2,3).

The pronouns often change (in Deuteronomy especially), showing a confusion between the voice of God and that of Moses. Dt. 7:4 is an example: "They will turn away thy son from following me (this is Moses speaking for God)...so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you". Thus Moses' comments on God's words are mixed up with the words of God Himself. There are other examples of this in Dt. 7:11; 29:1,10,14,15 ("I" cp. "us"). Consider especially Dt. 11:13,14: "If ye shall diligently hearken unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord...that I will give you the rain of your land...I will send grass in thy fields". The "I" here switches at ease between God and Moses. The Moses/God pronouns are also mixed in Rom. 10:19.

The entire promises to Abraham and the fathers depended for their realisation upon human obedience: "If ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep with thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers" (Dt. 7:12). That covenant was initially given in terms which omitted direct reference to any conditions for fulfilment. But it would be 'kept' by God if His people 'kept' His ways. The promises that God would multiply the seed of Abraham were conditional also; *if* Israel separated themselves from the peoples of the land, *then* He would "multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers" (Dt. 13:17).

Moses warns them not to "take pity" on false teachers, but to purge them from the community (Dt. 7:16; 13:8; 19:13,21; 25:12). Not once in the earlier Law does this warning occur. Moses had come to

know Israel so well that he could see how they were tempted to fail, and so he warned them forcibly against it. The way the Lord Jesus knows our thought processes, the mechanism of our temptations, is wondrously prefigured here. There are so many other examples of Moses showing his recognition of exactly *how* Israel were likely to be tempted (Dt. 6:11-13; 8:11-20; 9:4; 11:16; 12:13,19,23,30; 13:1-4; 14:27; 15:9,18; 17:11,12 ("will"),14,16,17; 21:18; 22:1-4,18; 23:21; 25:8).

The fear amongst the Canaanites prior to Israel's approach and the weakness of those nations was due to "the hornet" being sent before Israel (Dt. 7:20; Josh. 24:12); it would seem that this is a reference to the Angels softening up the Canaanite tribes, perhaps through inciting the Egyptians to raid them and ruin the economy. See on Ex. 23:27.

Israel were humbled by the Angel in their lives: "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee. . He . . suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna. . that He might make thee know that. . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Dt. 8:2,3). It was the Angel that led them, and provided manna (Ps. 78:23-25), and who needed to "know what was in thine heart" (Dt. 8:2)- God Himself knows the heart of men (Ps. 44:21; Jer. 17:10). Israel came to rely on God's command to the Angels to provide manna for their life. "He commanded the clouds (Angels). . and rained down manna " (Ps. 78:23,24). These commands were the "every word of God" that Israel came to rely on for their food.

Deut 8:2,3 speaks of how Angels as it were experiment with us in order to know our hearts: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee (the Angel did this) these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna. . "; the Angel gave them trials in order to find out what was in their heart. God "knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:21); "I the LORD search the heart" (Jer. 17:10), and therefore He does not have to tempt us -which James 1 says He Himself doesn't anyway- in order to know what is in our hearts. But His Angels do. Abraham and Hezekiah are other examples; see on 2 Chron. 32:31

Dt. 9:3 – see on Josh. 5:13,14; Jud. 1:8

Despite knowing their weakness and his own righteousness, Moses showed a marvellous softness and humility in that speech recorded in Deuteronomy. When he reminds them how God wanted to reject them because of their idolatry with the golden calf, he does not mention how fervently he prayed for them, so fervently that God changed His expressed intention (Dt. 9:14); and note deeply, *Moses does not mention how he offered his physical and eternal life for their salvation*. That fine, fine act and desire by Moses went unknown to Israel until the book of Exodus came into circulation. And likewise, the depth of Christ's love for us was unrecognised by us at the time. Moses had such humility in not telling in Israel in so many words how fervently he had loved them. The spiritual culture of the Lord is even greater. See on Ex. 32:32

9:15- see on Ex. 32:30

9:18- see on Ex. 32:32

Israel were certainly representative of us. The *degree* of love shown by Moses to Israel is only a shadow of the degree, the kind of love shown by Christ to us, who hopefully are not rejecting him as

Israel did. The power of this point just has to be reflected upon. That Moses could love Israel, to the extent of being willing to give his life and salvation for them, is a fine, fine type of the devotion of Christ. There is another oft emphasised aspect of Moses' love for Israel: the power of his mediation for them. We are told that God "hearkened" to Moses' prayers for them (Dt. 9:19; 10:10). He prayed for them with an intensity they didn't appreciate, he prayed for *and gained* their forgiveness before they had even repented, he pleaded *successfully* for God to relent from His plans to punish them, even before they knew that God had conceived such plans (Ex. 32:10,14; 33:17 etc.). The fact we will, at the end, be forgiven of some sins without specifically repenting of them (as David was in Ps. 19:12) ought to instil a true humility in us. This kind of thing is in some ways a contradiction of God's principles that personal repentance is required for forgiveness, and that our own effort is required if we are to find acceptability with Him. Of course ultimately these things are still true, and were true with respect to Israel.

10:10- see on 9:19

It was only through Moses' leadership that they reached Canaan: "The Lord said unto (Moses), Arise (cp. Christ's resurrection), take thy journey before the people (as Christ, the good shepherd, goes *before* the flock, Jn. 10:3), *that* they may go in and possess the land" (Dt. 10;11).

One of the most repeated themes of Moses in Deuteronomy is the way he keeps on telling them to "remember" all the great things which God had done for them on their wilderness journey (e.g. Dt. 10:21; 11:3-6), and especially the wonder of how he had redeemed them as children (his audience had been under twenty years old when they went through the Red Sea). Just look up all the times "remember" occurs in Deuteronomy. He really wanted them to overcome the human tendency to forget the greatness of God as manifested earlier in our lives and spiritual experience. Our tendency as the new Israel is just the same- to forget the wonder of baptism, of how God reached out His arm to save us.

11:8,11- see on 31:9; Josh. 1:6

Under Michael's control (see on Dan. 12:1) there are many other Angels similarly dedicated to the affairs of the people of Israel- Dt. 11:12 describes the land of Israel as "a land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God (i. e. the Angels) are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. Does the phrase "the LORD thy God" refer to the Angel which led them through the wilderness? The Angel Michael? Remember Moses was speaking to the people of Israel at this time, and they very much conceived of the "the LORD thy God" in terms of the Angel of the presence going with them. Thus God was promising that His Angels would physically be present in the land and would be especially sensitive to the events there.

11:13,14- see on 7:4

11:18- see on Song 8:6

God repeated the promise of blessing to Abraham at Shechem (Gen. 12:6), where later Israel had to chose between blessing and cursing (Dt. 11:29,30)- as if they had to make the choice to appropriate the promised blessing to themselves, or not.

Dt. 12:9- see on Ps. 132:8

12:32 As Moses very intensely manifested God to the people, so he foreshadowed the supreme manifestation of the Father in the Son. The commands of Moses were those of God (Dt. 7:11; 11:13,18; and 12:32 concerning Moses' words is quoted in Rev. 22:18,19 concerning God's words); his voice was God's voice (Dt. 13:18; 15:5; 28:1), as with Christ. Israel were to show their love of God by keeping Moses' commands (Dt. 11:13); as the new Israel do in their response to the word of Christ. Indeed, the well known prophecy that God would raise up a prophet "like unto" Moses to whom Israel would *listen* (Dt. 18:18) is in the context of Israel saying they did not want to hear God's voice directly. Therefore God said that he would raise up Christ, who would be another Moses in the sense that *he too* would speak forth God's word.

Moses speaks as if he assumed that surely Israel would love their neighbour as themselves: "Thy brother...or thy friend, which is as thine own soul" almost unconsciously reveals the depth of Moses' positive faith in their obedience, even though on the other hand he clearly understood their future apostasy (Dt. 13:6).

13:6-14 Despite omitting some of the Law's commands in his speech, there are other commands which Moses really emphasises and repeats within his speech; e.g. the need to destroy idols and false teachers, and to provide cities of refuge to cater for the sins they would commit without intending to (Dt. 7:5; 12:3, 23-25; 13:6-14 = 17:2-7). This surely reflects our Lord's attitude to us; it is his desire that we recognise our sinfulness, our likelihood of failure, our need to separate from things which will lead us away from Him. And yet the Christian community is increasingly blind to this. Moses' frequent references to the way in which the Exodus had separated Israel from Egypt show the same spirit (Dt. 13:5; 15:15; 16:12); as our Lord in his time of dying was so strongly aware of the way in which he was redeeming us from this present evil world.

The idea of the Angels' work for us being proportional to and dependent on our obedience is hard to fully accept, yet it is fundamental to our understanding of God's way of working in every enterprise we are involved in. The principle is outlined in Dt. 13:17, which said that the spoil of a captured city that was devoted to the Lord was not to be kept, as it was by Achan. This was so that "the Lord may. . . shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee". "The Lord" refers to the Angel, seeing that the attributes of mercy and compassion recall those of the Angel who declared them as part of His Name in Ex. 33 and 34. Dt. 13:17 continues: "... as He hath shown unto thy fathers...to multiply thee". These promises were made by Angels. Verse 18 lends further support ". . . do that which is right in the eyes (Angels) of the Lord thy God".

13:17- see on 7:12.

15:2 *Called*- The Hebrew means 'to call out, to announce', and the idea of proclaiming release / forgiveness [s.w.] of legitimate debt is the idea alluded to in the great commission- we are to call out, to announce to the world, the radical forgiveness of debt.

15:2 *The Lord's release*- Because God released, men were to release. God's release / forgiveness and ours are related. We are to forgive because He forgives, and there seems a suggestion in Mt. 16:19; 18:18 that what we bind and unloose is somehow confirmed by God in Heaven- our forgiveness or lack thereof becomes His.

15:2 *Exact*- S.w. to be a taskmaster, used of the Egyptians treating Israel like this (Ex. 3:7;

5:6,10,13,14). Unforgiveness and even demanding of others what we legitimately could, is effectively treating God's people as the Egyptians did. Our experience of deliverance from Egypt should mean that we will never likewise afflict others, but show them the same deliverance by grace which we experienced. The word is more usually translated "oppressor". For a creditor to demand repayment hardly seems like 'oppression', but God's view of our debt to Him, and the depth of His release of us, is such that He considers we have no right to demand back *any* debt. Indeed, to do so is seen by Him as oppression and abuse. In secular life, this seems a foolish and weak position; only those who have personally felt the depth of their own debt to God and gracious release will be motivated to release others. The sense of true release from debt should be so great to us that we simply would never think of demanding back debt from others, in whatever form. The Lord taught the same in the parable of the two debtors; the forgiven man failed to dwell upon the wonder of His release, and therefore demanding debts back from his brother.

15:4 *Save when there shall be no poor...* (AV)- This could be interpreted as meaning that Israelites could press for the restoration of debts when and if there were no poor within Israel. The implication could also be that by demanding the return of debts, the poor were driven into deeper poverty.

15:4- see on 4:42

Having reminded them that if they were obedient, "there shall be no poor among you; for the Lord shall greatly bless thee", Moses goes on to comment that "the poor shall never cease out of the land"- and he gives the legislation cognisant of this (Dt. 15:4,11). Moses realized by the time of Deuteronomy that they wouldn't make it to the blessings which were potentially possible.

:4 The spirit of not demanding debts and writing them off every seven years would not lead to poverty. And that is why people demand the return of debts- they fear they will become poor otherwise. Here we have a totally counter-instinctive command- to not demand debts to be repaid because there should be no fear of poverty amongst those who are the blessed of the Lord. We may lose the extra we lent- but not descend into poverty. That assurance should be enough.

:6 *You shall lend*- We see God's utter grace in that this blessing has often come true of Israel, despite their *disobedience*.

:7 Verse 4 has just predicted that if Israel were obedient, there would be no poor person. But as so often in Deuteronomy, there is the realistic acceptance that Israel will not be obedient, and an appropriate mechanism from God in dealing with even that situation. The context suggests therefore that the poor man was poor because of poor decisions and disobedience to God's word- but still there was to be generosity to him, without arguing that his poverty was his own fault. For we have all been saved by utter grace from the eternal consequence of our sins, and each sin was avoidable...

:8 *His need*- s.w. Ps. 34:9 "there is no *want* to them that fear the Lord". Again, the point is that his need was perhaps due to his own poor behaviour. The same word is used in Proverbs to describe the need or want that comes to the lazy and unspiritual (Prov. 14:23; 21:5; 24:34). But still that need is

to be responded to, as Proverbs also makes clear- the needy are to be helped. "He that gives to the poor [s.w.] shall not lack" (Prov. 28:27). That Proverb would appear a comment upon Dt. 15:8-10.

:10 *Be grieved*- The Hebrew is usually translated 'evil'. To feel mean towards helping someone who is in a fault of their own making [according to the rest of Old Covenant teaching about 'need' and 'poverty'] is a great evil, but we will only perceive that if we perceive our own poverty before God and His grace toward us- see :15.

:10 *All you put your hand to*- Note the connection with the usage of 'hand' in :8. If you open your hand wide, then whatever you put your hand to will be blessed. There is here the implication of an upward spiral- if we open our hand to others, in not demanding of them that which we could and being generous to the need [not only financial] of our poor brother, then the work of our hand will be blessed yet more.

:11 *Your poor... your needy*- They are "your" poor and "your" needy. Their issues and needs are *yours*. There's amazing psychological penetration here into the thought processes we have when we encounter need and poverty, in whatever sense. We so easily assume that firstly, it is 'their fault', and secondly, that someone else will respond- perhaps God directly. But the needs and poverty are *ours*. These two reasons are likely the most common reasons for our lack of response to others' need.

:12-14 The language of letting the servant go free, sending him away, but not letting him go empty but giving him of your good things- is all the language of the Egyptians sending the Israelites out of Egypt, but not "empty". And this is made explicit in :15. We are to treat others as we were treated by God when He redeemed us from Egypt. There are times and contexts in which we are effectively Egypt to others, having power over them- the power to forgive, for example.

16:2- see on Dt. 20:14

16:15- see on Ps. 90:3

Despite being fully aware of how weak Israel were, Moses often speaks of the " blessing" which God would give them for obedience; he even speaks of the future blessing of obedience in the prophetic perfect, so confident was he that they would receive it: " Every man shall give as he is able (once he is settled in the land), according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he *hath* given thee" (Dt. 16:17). Moses speaks with confidence of how God would grant them the blessing of the land and victory over their enemies, even though these things were conditional upon their obedience (Dt. 19:1; 20:13), and even though Moses clearly knew that most of them would disobey. The conclusion from this is that Moses thought so much of that minority who would obey his covenant, who would grasp the spirit of his life and the speech he was now making. And our Lord likewise- in his feelings for us, we trust.

Moses adds a whole series of apparently 'minor' commands which were designed to make obedience easier to the others already given. Thus he tells them in Deuteronomy not to plant a grove of trees near the altar of God - because he knew this would provoke the possibility of mixing Yahweh worship with that of the surrounding world (Dt. 16:21). Likewise he commands any future

king not to send God's people to Egypt to buy horses because he could see that this would tempt them to go back to Egypt permanently (Dt. 17:16). There are many other examples of this kind of thing (Dt. 14:24; 15:18; 17:17-19; 18:9; 20:7,8). The point is that Moses had thought long and hard about the ways in which Israel would be tempted to sin, and his words and innermost desire were devoted to helping them overcome. Glorious ditto for the Lord Jesus.

17:16- see on 16:21

The degree to which God wanted Israel to conceive of Him in terms of Angels is shown by carefully considering the command for Israel not to have chariots (Dt. 17:16 cp. Is. 2:7). As this form of transport became increasingly popular, it must have seemed as crazy as Christians being told not to possess motor cars. There must have therefore been a highly significant teaching behind it. Was the purpose of it to make Israel look to the Angel-cherubim chariots of God? The word for 'cherubim' carries the idea of a chariot; the notion of horsemen corresponds with the Angel horseriders of Zechariah and Revelation.

17:17- see on Dt. 20:14

18:18- see on Heb. 2:17

The Messianic prophecy of Dt. 18:18 had a potential Messianic and primary fulfillment in Joshua: "I will raise them up [God 'rose up' Joshua- s.w. Josh. 1:2; 7:10,13; 8:1,3] a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee [Joshua's life was framed to be like that of Moses- e.g. he too was told to remove his shoe when on holy ground, also held his hands up whilst Israel fought their enemies]; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him [Joshua is constantly presented as telling Israel what God commanded him- Josh. 4:8,10,17; 6:10; 8:8: "according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do. See, I have commanded you"; 8:27]. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him". The 'likeness' between Moses and the prophet like unto him was in that the prophet would also speak God's words in a similar way. Josh. 11:15 therefore significantly comments: "As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua: and so did Joshua; he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses". Joshua was a potential Messiah.

A theme of Deuteronomy is the way in which Moses visualizes commonplace daily incidents which he could foresee occurring in Israel's daily life: the man cutting down the tree and the axe head flying off and hitting someone; finding a dead body in a lonely field; coming across a stray animal on the way home from work; a man with two wives treating one as his favourite; seeing your neighbour struggling to lift up his sick animal; coming across a bird's nest and being tempted to take the mature bird as well as the chicks home for supper; being tempted not to bother building a battlement around the flat roof of your new house; the temptation to take a bag with you and fill it up with your neighbour's grapes; the need to have weapons which could be used for covering excrement (Dt. 19:5; 21:1,15; 22:1,2,4,6,8; 23:13,24,25; 24:5,6,10,15,19; 25:11,13). The sensitivity of Moses was just fantastic! His eager imagination of His people in daily life, his understanding of their everyday temptations so superbly typifies that of our Lord!

19:11 There are 23 references to not hating in Deuteronomy, compared to only 5 in Ex. - Num.; Moses saw the danger of bitterness and lack of love. He saw these things as the spiritual cancer they are, in his time of maturity he warned his beloved people against them. His mind was full of them.

The softness of Moses, the earnestness of his desire for their obedience, his eagerness to work with them in their humanity, is shown by the concessions to human weakness which he makes in Deuteronomy (with God's confirmation, of course). When they attacked a foreign city, OK, Moses says, you can take the women for yourselves- even though this is contrary to the spirit of earlier commands (Dt. 20:14; 21:11). Likewise with the provisions for having a human king (Dt. 17:17) and divorce (24:1-4). He knew the hardness of Israel's hearts, their likelihood to give way to temptation, and so he made concessions contrary to the principles behind other parts of the Law (Mt. 19:8). And Dt. 16:2 seems to imply that now, the Passover sacrifice didn't necessarily have to be a lamb, and it could be boiled not just roasted (:7).

21:11- see on Dt. 20:14.

22:1 *Hide yourself*- As in :3,4. This penetrates psychologically to the very core of our inaction and frequent sins of omission- we hide the need we encounter from ourselves. We pretend we have not seen. Prov. 28:27 uses the same word: "He that gives to the poor shall not lack: but he that hides his eyes shall have many a curse" (as in Is. 58:7- "Deal your bread to the hungry.... hide not your eyes"). This theme of sins of omission is continued throughout the chapter in :8 and in connection with the woman who did not cry out when raped, for fear of social consequence, being punished with the same punishment as the rapist.

:7 The bird could only be taken if it was devoted to its young and was willing to die with them, rather than flying away. Such loyalty was to be noticed and respected. This is how to 'do life' in a spiritual way- perceive the good even in the natural creation and learn from it.

:8 There is a big principle here. We are responsible for the fall of others, to death or spiritually, if we do not take adequate care for them. That is a principle which alone can drive our entire life's work.

:9 *Defiled*- The idea of the Hebrew is sanctification. The whole fruit was to be dedicated in this case- maybe to destruction, maybe to the priests.

:19 This was a heavy fine, double that for raping a virgin (:29). This reflects the seriousness with which God views slander.

:19 *To the father*- Slander hurts not only the victim but also their family.

The ruling that he could never divorce her reveals how the Law of Moses operated on different levels. Divorce was only permitted for unfaithfulness, which was punishable by death. But this command suggests that divorce was permitted in practice for lesser issues.

:22 *Fringes*- Each Israelite was to emulate the High Priest, who had such clothing. Daily reminders of spirituality are vital in the daily round.

23:14 In prospect all Israel's battles with the inhabitants of Canaan had been won by the Angels, and it was for them to live in a suitable way and to display enough faith to enable them to make use of these victories. "The LORD thy God (the Angel) walketh in the midst of thy camp (a phrase used by the Angel earlier and then repented of- "I will not go up in the midst of thee") to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that He see no unclean thing in thee and turn away from thee" (Deut 23:14).

Under the Law, Israel were not to lend to their poor brother upon usury (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:37); but now in the 'second law' [Deuteronomy] Moses forbids them to do this to *any* Israelite (Dt. 23:19).

Moses does not repeat every single commandment in the Law. Rather are there several themes of Moses in Deuteronomy presented. His choice of which ones he does repeat indicates his feelings towards Israel. His sensitivity towards the weakest and poorest of Israel comes out in this. He was reaching the spirit of the Lord Jesus, who said that the weakest of his brethren represented him (Mt. 25:40 Gk.). Thus Moses stresses how they were not to go into the house of a poor man to take back his pledge (Dt. 24:10); Moses could enter into the sense of shame and embarrassment of the poor man when a richer man enters his home. The Law in Exodus 22:26 did not stipulate that the house of the poor man should not be entered; by making this point in his farewell speech, Moses was showing his sensitivity, his ability now to enter into the feelings of the poorest of God's people. Indeed, the whole passage in Deuteronomy (24:6-17) about pledges is quite an expansion upon what the Law actually said in Ex. 22. And this from a man who could have been the king of Egypt, who could have had the world.

Moses' sensitivity is shown by the introduction in Deuteronomy [the 'second law'] of expansions upon existing commandments; e.g. "thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" (Dt. 25:4). This is quoted by Paul as being actually part of the Law (1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18), showing that Moses was so attune with the mind of God that these practical extensions which his sensitivity led him to command Israel were indeed the inspired commandments of God.

26:5 Aramaean / Syrian- see on Gen. 20:13

27:4-8 The word "commandments" occurs 43 times in Deuteronomy, and only 19 times in the other three records; "remember" occurs 16 times compared to 8 times in the other three. And yet Moses commanded Israel specifically to engrave the law on tables of plaster, not stone, knowing that they would soon be washed away; thus he wished to teach Israel [or try to] the temporary nature of the Law (Dt. 27:4-8). Like Paul in his time of dying, Moses saw the importance of obedience, the harder side of God; yet he also saw in real depth the surpassing *love* of God, and the grace that was to come, beyond Law.

There are links between Job and Deuteronomy 28, connecting Job with a faithless Israel:

Deut. 28

:29 "Thou shalt grope at noonday,
as the blind gropeth in darkness

Job

"They (the wicked; although the
friends are getting at Job when they
speak of them) meet with darkness
in the daytime and grope in the
noonday as in the night" (5:14).

:29 " The blind"	Job had fits of blindness (22:10,11)
:35 " The Lord shall smite thee in the knees and in the legs with a sore botch from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head"	" Boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (2:7) were inflicted by satan. " The Lord" in Dt.28 was the wilderness Angel; which is one of several indications that Job's satan was an Angel...
:37 " An astonishment...	" Mark me (Job) and be astonished" (21:5;17:8).
and a byword, among all nations"	" A byword of the people" (17:6;30:9). " Now am I their song" (30:9).
:67 " In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning"	" When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro until the dawning" (7:4).
All the Jews' blessings from God were to be taken away and their children cursed:" Thou shalt beget sons and daughters but thou shalt not enjoy them" (v.41). " Cattle.. flocks of thy sheep" (v.51).	Ditto for Job
" The Lord shall bring a nation against thee (v.49);	The Sabeans/ Chaldeans- forerunners of the Babylonians and Assyrians who punished Israel.

28:50-57 Moses not only repeats all the curses of Lev. 26 to them, but he adds even more, under inspiration (Dt. 28:50-57). Presumably the Angel had explained in one of their conversations how Israel would suffer even greater punishment than what He had outlined in Lev. 26. Notice in passing that Lev. 26 and Dt. 28 are not strictly parallel. And in some ways, Moses became more demanding, whilst at the same time emphasizing grace and love.

For all Moses' desire for Israel's obedience, there are some subtle differences in his attitude to law and obedience between Deuteronomy, and the law earlier given. Thus in Leviticus 26 it was stressed that obedience would bring blessing; whilst Dt. 28:58 says that obedience results in fearing the fearful Name of Yahweh and His glory. Fear shouldn't lead to obedience; but obedience leads a man to *know and fear his God and His Name*. This is blessing enough. Like Jacob and Job, Moses came to a fine appreciation of Yahweh's Name at his latter end.

28:58 All the commands of Moses' law were in order to teach Israel to appreciate and respect the character and name of Yahweh (Dt. 28:58) - therefore all this commands were a manifestation of the fundamental personality of the Father. Ditto for the words of Jesus, who was the prophet who

would speak God's word as Moses spoke it (Dt. 18:15-18). Because Jesus would speak God's word as Moses did, the words of Moses should be studied as much as the words of Jesus - as Jesus himself said (Jn. 5:47). Yet do we *love* the Law of Moses as David did? Or do we not incline to be spiritually lazy, to be influenced by the (so called) New Testament Christianity of the apostate religious world around us? It is only by truly entering into the spirit of Moses' words that we can really understand our Lord - he said this himself. And yet we would rather read Jesus' words than those of Moses, because we can't be bothered to make *the effort to understand the spirit of our Lord as it is revealed there*. And therefore we complain (if we are honest) of a lack of sense that we are having a real relationship with the Lord Jesus.

29:1 This additional repetition of the covenant was because by grace, God wished to reaffirm the covenant even though Israel had broken their part of it- see on :13 and :23.

29:2-3 "You have seen. . . your eyes have seen". As in 4:34 and 7:19. They had not literally seen these things- the audience by the end of Deuteronomy included those who had been born during the 40 years wandering. But historical events in God's word are as if we were there, hence David can rejoice as if he personally was delivered at the Red Sea.

:4 In :2 we are told "you have seen" , but they didn't spiritually 'see' what they saw with their physical eyes. God confirms people in the psychological attitudes they adopt.

29:8 To take and give land for an inheritance whilst still on the East side of Jordan was a foretaste of what was possible for them when they entered the land West of Jordan. The same terms are used about what Israel were to do with the rest of the land- although their fear of the Canaanite tribes suggests they didn't learn the lesson. It was a foretaste of the Kingdom... and our wilderness walk is designed, especially towards the end of it, to have similar foretastes encouraging us that really this is what we will experience.

29:9- see on Josh. 1:6

29:13 The promise that Israel would be God's people and He would be their God was conditional upon their obedience- that was the deal made with them nearly 40 years previously (Ex. 19:5,6). They had not kept their side of it- but by grace, God still wanted to fulfill His side of it. Israel would be 'established' as God's people "unto Himself" only if they were obedient (Dt. 28:9)- the point of the covenant proclaimed in chapter 29 is that despite their disobedience, God was still going to establish them as His people. This was the grace that only comes from a deep love and desire for the beloved.

29:21 The ministering of judgement on the unworthy will no doubt be supervised by an (the?) Angel of evil, in the same way that it appears an Angel of evil ministered the curses of the Law: "The Lord shall separate (Hebrew: sever) him (the disobedient man) out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the words of the covenant" (Dt. 29:21)- just as He did to Achan. In the same way the Angels "sever the wicked from among the just" (Mt. 13:49) at the judgement. The picture of the rejected severed from among God's people is fairly common in the pictures of condemnation- the people of God shall see the naked shame of the rejected (Rev. 16:15). Willful separation from God's people in this life, either by thinking them worthy of our rejection or through disinterest in them, is therefore living out the picture of condemnation.

29:23 Israel were disobedient, but still this promised judgment didn't come. This chapter is full of grace.

29:29 This could be translated as meaning that the secret things of God have been revealed unto God's children. Or it could mean that the things which have been revealed are the Law and Covenant made with Israel then, but they should not think that this was all there was to God. There was more, the "secret things", which had not then been opened to them. And those things were the things of Christ and the new covenant- 1 Cor. 2:9,10 appears to allude here by saying that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" .

Moses pleaded with them to see that " this day...this day...this day" he set before them life and death, forgiveness or salvation (Dt. 30:15-19). The Lord Jesus had His mind on this when He told the thief with the same emphasis that " this day" He could tell them that he would be saved, not condemned (Lk. 23:46). He felt like Moses, but greater than Moses, in that He not only set before men the choice, but could grant them the salvation they sought.

Finely aware of the seriousness of our relationship with God, Moses pleads with Israel to " choose life" , not with the passivity which may appear from our armchair reading of passages like Dt. 30:19. Yet he knew that the majority of Israel would not choose life. When he appeals to them to choose obedience he is therefore thinking of the minority who would respond. Our Lord Jesus, with his knowledge of human nature, must have sensed that so many of those called into his new covenant would also turn away; He must have known that only a minority of Israel would choose the life which He offered. Yet like Moses He doubtless concentrated his thoughts on the minority who would respond. Moses spoke Deuteronomy without notes. It was no set piece address. All these things were in his heart; their proneness to failure, the coming of judgment for sin, his knowledge of their future apostasy. Enter into the *passion* of it all. The man who was willing to give his eternal life for them, about to die for the sake of their provocation- singing a final song to them, giving a final speech, which showed that he knew perfectly well that they would turn away from what he was trying to do for them, and therefore the majority of them would not be saved.

31:2- see on 31:9

31:3- see on 1:36

Moses recalled how God had said to him "The LORD thy God He will go over before thee", and then said to Joshua "be strong and of a good courage, fear not nor be afraid of them: for the LORD *thy* God (the same Angel called 'the LORD thy God' in relation to Moses), He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:3,6,7). These words are quoted in Heb. 13:5, and it is good to note the original Angelic context in which the words were used: "Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I (the Angel) will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord (i. e. the Angel) is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me". Later on we see that Joshua did conceive of God in terms of the Angel- he took Moses' exhortation.

At Moses' death, the positive thrust of his closing exhortation was his conviction that the Angel of His presence which had been with them so far would continue to be so, to enable them to enter the land. This alone shows the great part that the Angel played in Moses' life. "The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee. . . and Joshua shall go over before thee. . . and Joshua shall go over before thee (showing Moses' belief that Joshua would work with the Angel- cp. Ps. 91, where Moses commends Joshua for keeping close to the Angel in the tabernacle). . . Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God (the Angel God of Israel), He it is that doth go with thee, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:3-6).

31:6,8- see on 31:17; Josh. 1:6

Dt. 4:31 and 31:6,8 say that despite the sins Israel may commit, their Angel-God "will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant. . . He will not fail thee". But then Dt. 31:17 says that because the people would disobey Him, God "will forsake them. . . and they shall be devoured. . . and I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought". We have seen that in the Pentateuch, especially in God's dealings with Israel on their journey, God is to be conceived of as an Angel; which would explain the apparent fickleness shown here.

Note that the promise of Moses that God would not fail nor forsake Joshua, but would be with him (Dt. 31:8) was similar to the very promise given to Moses which he had earlier doubted (Ex. 3:12; 4:12,15). Such exhortation is so much the stronger from someone who has themselves doubted and then come to believe.

31:9 The word of his God was in his heart, as he stood there before Israel, that people whom he loved, those for whom he wished to make atonement with his own life, even his eternal life. "Yea, he loved the people" is the Spirit's comment (Dt. 33:3- the " he" in the context seems to be Moses). It could only be the Spirit which would write so concisely. "Yea, he loved the people....they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words" . This is God's comment on that last meeting between Moses and Israel. And then he pours out his heart to them, he reels off what we have as the book of Deuteronomy (it takes about four hours to read it through loud), writes a copy of the Law (31:9; notice how Dt. 24 was *written* by Moses, Mk. 10:5), sings a Song to that silent multitude (surely with a lump in his throat, especially at points like 32:15), and then he turns and climbs the mountain to see the land and meet his death. The fact it all happened on his birthday just adds to the pathos of it all (Dt. 31:2). The huge amount of work which he did on that last day of his life looks forward to the Lord's huge achievement in the day of his death. No wonder Yahweh describes that day of Moses' death with an intensive plural: " The days (i.e. the one great time / day) approach (s.w. " at hand" , " made ready") that thou must die" (Dt. 31:14). It seems that he said much of the book in one day; hence his repeated mention of the phrase " this day" throughout the book. The people were often reminded that they were about to "go over [Jordan] to possess" the land (Dt. 11:8,11 RV), as if they were on the banks of Jordan almost. In reality that speech of Deuteronomy was the outpouring of his heart, pleading with Israel to be faithful to the covenant, encouraging them to be aware of their weakness, encouraging them to go forward and inherit the Kingdom. Not only do we have a powerful type of the Lord Jesus in all this; Israel assembled before him really do represent us. Dt.32:36 (" the Lord shall judge his people") is quoted in Heb. 10:20 as relevant to all of us.

31:14- see on 31:9

Yahweh said that He would give Joshua a charge; but Moses gave Joshua the charge (Dt. 31:14,23). God was so strongly manifested in Moses.

31:16- see on 34:6

31:16 A few hours before the death of Moses, he had been telling Israel: " While I am yet alive with you this day (for a few more hours), ye have been rebellious against Yahweh; and how much more after my death?" (Dt. 31:27). Earlier that same day the Angel had told him: " Thou shalt *lie down* (mg.) with thy fathers (cp. the Angel lying him down in the grave)...and this people will *rise up* (i.e. immediately after his death), and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land" (Dt. 31:16). No wonder this was ringing in Moses' ears as he came to his death. Yet he triumphed in the fact that a minority would not give way. *His very last words* were a confident exaltation that ultimately Israel would overcome their temptations, the influence and idols of the surrounding world. But he knew that the majority of them would spiritually fall because of these things. Therefore he was looking forward to the minority in Israel who would gloriously overcome, who would come to the Kingdom, the land of corn and wine, when the heavens would drop dew. This is clearly the language of Ps. 72 and Isaiah about the future Kingdom. Moses met death with the vision of the faithful minority in the Kingdom, in the promised land, having overcome all their besetting temptations. And the Lord Jesus died with exactly that same vision (Ps. 22:22-31; 69: 30-36).

32:3- see on 1 Cor. 10:4; Jn. 17:8

As Christ declared God's Name just before his death (Jn. 17:26), so did Moses (Dt. 32:3 LXX).

32:4- see on Jn. 17:11

32:5- see on Phil. 2:15

32:8 see on Dan. 10:20,21; Ex. 24:9-11

Dt. 32:13 honey- see on Ps. 81:16

32:15- see on 31:9

32:15,18- see on Gen. 49:24

Dt. 32:20,27: "I will see what their end shall be. . were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy. . and lest they should say. . the Lord hath not done this". God Himself knows the end from the beginning and need fear no man; but His Angels do not have ultimate knowledge or strength, and therefore such language is more suited to them. This 'language of limitation' may refer to the Angels rather than God personally.

32:24 see on 1 Kings 22:22

32:36- see on 31:9

Dt. 32:36: "For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their hand is gone, and there is none shut up, or left". The hand that was with Israel was their

Angel- after the Angel physically left Israel, resulting in their punishment, the very pity of their state caused the Angel to repent, and return to them. He "shall judge his people". This is quoted in Heb. 10:20 concerning the judgement seat- where we know the Angels will play an important part.

Moses being gathered to his people by an Angel (Dt. 32:50) may also refer to his spirit/Angel returning to where the guardian Angels of his ancestors were. This solves the considerable difficulty of his ancestors being physically dead and decayed, and being buried in a different place from where Moses died.

In those hours as Moses stood there saying those words of Deuteronomy, and then as he sung that song of Moses to them of Dt. 32, I think we see Moses at his finest. His voice would have been that of a young man, and yet with all the passion of meaning of his 120 years. And then he blesses those assembled tribes, the *love* of that man for Israel flowing out, with that same wondrous voice. " Yea, he *loved* the people" . And then, no doubt with a lump in his throat, swallowing back the tears, he turned and walked away, up that mountain, higher and higher, with the blue mountains of Moab shimmering in the distance. " That selfsame day" Moses spoke Deuteronomy, God commanded him: " Get thee up into this mountain...and behold the land...and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people" (Dt. 32:50). Like the Lord Jesus, he received a commandment to die (Jn. 10:18; 14:31), and yet he presumably did not know how to consciously fulfil it according to his own actions. He climbed the mountain alone, that same day he spoke Deuteronomy. Presumably he spoke Deuteronomy in the morning, sung the song of Moses, and then " that selfsame day" died. It would have taken him time to climb the mountain, to be met at the top by the Angel, who then showed him the land, kissed him (see later) and buried him. Presumably he died late in the day, watching the sun setting over the promised land- perhaps at the same hour Jesus died. The pathos of the scene is wondrous, the Song of Moses as it were can be heard still echoing. Yet in the sadness of it all, we see prefigured the death of Christ for us. It was for their sakes that Moses didn't enter the land, remember. That is the emphasis the Spirit gives. As he climbed, for it would have taken a while, perhaps he thought back to those years in Egypt, the struggle of his soul in those years. You may think I'm being over emotional, but it seems to me as he climbed he would have thought back to his dear mum to whom he owed his relationship with God, the mother he'd doubtless disowned for forty years, admitting that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He would have reflected how at age 40 he was honest with himself, how he told the world who his real mother was (probably, tragically enough, after her death, sad that her son seemed to have rejected her for the pleasures of Egypt), how he had refused to be called any longer the son of Pharaoh's daughter. I mean, if we had say 24 hours to live, and we were told to go for a walk before we died, I guess we'd think back to our childhood for at least a moment, wouldn't we. And he was a man, just like you and me, with all a man's feelings, all a man's memories, all a man's humanity. I believe, although I can't prove it, that he wept all the way to the top, climbing farther and farther away from the people he loved, knowing that the majority simply didn't understand him and what he had suffered for them. And perhaps as he sung the song of Moses, he thought back to those weak years in Midian, to Zipporah, to the arguments with her, to the pain of the divorce, to the Ethiopian woman, to the long lonely days with the animals. And then to the wonder of the Red Sea, to the nervousness of meeting the Angel, to the joy of that communion in another mountain. He knew that Angel well, they spoke face to face as men who are friends speak to each other (Ex. 33:11).

32:51- see on 1:37

it would seem that only at the end of his days did Moses recognize the extent of the Angelic presence. The fact that the cloud that they followed was actually composed of thousands of mighty Angels seems only to have been recognized by Moses in his blessing of the people "before his death" in Dt. 33:1,2. There he says in an ecstasy of praise to God for His greatness and closeness to His people, "The LORD came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of His saints (Angels): from His right hand (i. e. the Angels- they ministered the Law) went a fiery law for them"; whilst earlier we only read "And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran" (Num. 10:12). The passage in Dt. 33 almost seems a direct comment on this earlier description.

33:2,3- see on Ex. 7:4

Dt. 33:2,3 RVmg. bring out the solidarity between the Angels and Israel by describing them both as thousands of saints / holy ones.

33:3- see on Jn. 17:8

The word of his God was in his heart, as he stood there before Israel, that people whom he loved, those for whom he wished to make atonement with his own life, even his eternal life. " Yea, he loved the people" is the Spirit's comment (Dt. 33:3- the " he" in the context seems to be Moses). It could only be the Spirit which would write so concisely. " Yea, he loved the people....they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words" . And then he pours out his heart to them, he reels off what we have as the book of Deuteronomy, written at the end point of the spiritual growth of Moses. But in reality that was the outpouring of his heart, pleading with Israel to be faithful to the covenant, encouraging them to be aware of their weakness, encouraging them to go forward and inherit the Kingdom.

33:9- see on Jn. 17:6; Jn. 17:17

33:17- see on Gen. 48:5

Through it all we sense the great love of Yahweh, manifest in that Angel, for His servant. And this all typifies the tenderness of God for Jesus in his time of dying. As we think of the Angel lowering the body of Moses, with his arms around and underneath him, it seems no accident that the last words of Moses spoke of this very thing: " There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency in the sky. *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee....Israel then shall dwell in safety alone (language of the future Kingdom, Ez. 29:26; 34:25): the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by Yahweh...thine enemies shall be subdued unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" , i.e. their idols (Dt. 33:26-29). Surely these Moses' last words could not have been said without his voice cracking with emotion.

33:28- see on Gen. 27:28

Moses died " by the mouth of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley...but no man knoweth of his sepulchre" (Dt. 34:5,6 Heb.). " By the mouth of the Lord" can imply a kiss; as if the Angel kissed Moses, and this resulted in his death. Remember, the Angel was Moses *friend* (Ex. 33:11). It was a reversal of how the Angel created Adam and breathed into his nose the Spirit; now the Angel kisses Moses and takes it away. And then he buried him, laying him in the grave in hope of better days, when Christ would come and raise his people, when God's people would at last be obedient. What an end. Moses seems to have foreseen this when he said that "We bring our years to an end with a sigh", a final outbreathing (Ps. 90:9 RVmg.). And then the Angel built a sepulchre. Just picture that Angel perhaps digging, yes *digging* the grave, building the sepulchre of the rocks laying around in that cleft in the mountain. In the context of Moses leading Israel, we are told: " A beast goeth down into the valley (tired at the end of a day, led there to drink by a loving owner), the Spirit (Angel) of the Lord caused him to rest" (Is. 63:14). Remember how Moses was buried by the Angel in a valley in the mountain (Dt. 34:6). The Hebrew translated " rest" means both to physically lay down and to comfort. So we have the picture of the Angel comforting Moses with the hope of resurrection, kissing him goodnight as it were, and then laying him down in the grave. The softness of God at the death of Moses, the gentleness, prefigured above all the gentleness, in a sense, of the Father with His Son at the cross; and His gentleness with each of us in our time of dying. Let's remember this idea. For short of the second coming, we're all mortal. There's something wondrous about the death of Moses. It's as if God took Moses' funeral- and said in truth 'This is the best man I've yet known', as a man might say at the funeral of his best friend.

An alternative reconstruction of the death of Moses is possible. Rabbinical tradition says that " he buried him" (Dt. 34:6) is reflexive; it means that Moses buried himself. For confirmation of this, see S.R.Hirsch, *The Pentateuch*, Vol. 5 p.685 (New York: Judaica Press, 1971). It is the same Hebrew construction as in Lev. 22:16 and Num. 6:13. In this case, the description of Christ as 'making his own grave' (Is. 53:9) could be read as an allusion to the death of Moses. Therefore the pattern of events was perhaps something like this: The Angel showed Moses the land; Moses, in the presence of the Angel, dug his own grave and lowered himself into it, as a conscious act of the will, in obedience to God's command (as the prototype of the Lord Jesus). The prophesy that Moses would *lie down* in death takes on a literal sense in this case (Dt. 31:16). Then the Angel kissed him, and he died. The Angel then built up the sepulchre over his body. Personally I feel this was what happened, but I am cautious to strongly push ideas which rely on a fine point of Hebrew grammar.

34:7 abated- see on Ex. 18:18

God's opening commission to Joshua was that the people were to possess the whole land promised to Abraham, right up to the Euphrates (Josh. 1:4). But Joshua ended up drawing up the borders of the land far smaller than these; he didn't even seek to subdue the territory up to the Euphrates, even though God had promised him potential success and even commanded him to do so. Joshua was to divide up the whole land promised to Abraham, amongst the tribes of Israel (Josh. 1:6). And yet in the extensive descriptions of Joshua dividing up the land, we don't find him dividing up that

whole territory up to the Euphrates. He seems to have lacked that vision, and fallen into the mire of minimalism, just content with a utilitarian, small scale conquest, rather than seeing the bigger picture of the potential Kingdom which God wanted to give His people.

Joshua was encouraged that "As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh. 1:5). But these very words are quoted in Heb. 13:5 as the grounds of our matchless confidence that the Lord God will be with us too! As He was with Moses- not just in power, but in wondrous patience and gentleness- so He will be with us too. Not only did God encourage Joshua to see himself as in Moses' shoes; He inspired Jeremiah likewise (Jer. 21:8 = Dt. 30:15,19), and Ezekiel (Ez. 2:3 = Dt. 31:27; Neh. 9:17; Num. 17:10); and He wishes us to also see Moses' God as our God.

Joshua is repeatedly made parallel with Israel; his victories were theirs; what he achieved is counted to them. In the same way, the people of the Lord Jesus are counted as Him. Joshua was to be strong and possess the land (Josh. 1:6), just as they had been told to do, using the same Hebrew words (Dt. 11:8). Indeed, Israel and Joshua are given parallel charges, to be strong and of good courage to take the land (Dt. 31:6,7). Both Israel and Joshua are given the same charge to keep the words of the covenant, that they might "prosper" (Dt. 29:9; Josh. 1:7). See on Is. 59:21

Note the repeated encouragement to be strong and of a good courage and not be fearful (Dt. 31:23; Josh. 1:6,7,8,18). What does this imply about Joshua?

God's servant Joshua was intended to "prosper" (Josh. 1:7); but in the end it was the Lord Jesus through His death who was the servant who would "deal prudently" [s.w. 'prosper', Is. 52:13]. And so, in His foreknowledge, God spoke of "another day" when His begotten Son would fulfil what all those men could potentially have achieved, and so much more (Heb. 4:8). The lesson for us is that so much has been potentially prepared for us to achieve. Our salvation may not necessarily depend upon achieving all those things, but all the same, so much potentially is possible which we refuse to reach up to, because we are petty minimalists, like Israel, satisfied with their little farm in the valley, rather than seeking to possess the fullness of the Kingdom prepared for them.

As God charged him to be courageous and obedient to the book of the Law, so Joshua on his deathbed charged his people (Josh. 1:7,8 cp. 23:6). Joshua had faithfully followed, and now he became the leader who was to be faithfully followed. Likewise, he led the Israelites in battle whilst Moses stood on the hill with arms uplifted in prayer for his success. And in capturing Ai, it was Joshua's turn to stand on a hill with arms uplifted [also in prayer?] whilst Israel fought.

1:8- see on Ps. 1:1-3

The spies were sent out "secretly" (Josh. 2:1). I'd argue that the sending out of the 12 spies about 40 years earlier was essentially a lack of faith- in the fact that God's Angel had gone ahead of them anyway to spy out the land, and Yahweh Himself had told Israel how good the land was. Perhaps the secrecy involved a sense that this was in fact not really a very spiritual decision and Joshua was somehow furtive about it. Israel had never known urban life nor perhaps even seen walled cities like Jericho. The spies entered the city at evening time, and the gate was shut. Strangers always attract attention in such places- let alone when the city was in the direct line of attack of the Hebrews. The language / accent of the two spies would've given them away. According to the record in Joshua 2, it

seems they entered the city gates at dusk, the gates were shut, and they'd have perceived that they were being watched and had been noticed as suspicious strangers. And so they used some desperate initiative, and dived into a whorehouse nearby to the gate. This was the sort of place strangers would go to, as it would be today. We imagine them entering the house, and meeting the madame of the house. "What do you want?" was as dumb a question as the doctor asking the patient "How are you feeling today?". Rahab was a smart woman, accustomed to strangers, and knew what was going on. Within the first couple of sentences, she'd have figured who they were. And it seems they spoke for a short time, maybe an hour or so, realized they were busted, understood they were in a death trap within that walled city, and threw themselves on her mercy. And there, providence kicked in. James 2:25 calls those men "messengers", with a message Rahab believed. They hardly had an hour to tell her the message, before men were knocking on the door enquiring what Rahab knew about the spies. In that brief time, she believed a very sketchy and incomplete Gospel of the Kingdom. And her works reflected that faith, in telling the men [whom local culture would've barred from entering the house of a single woman] that the spies had come and gone. "That was *quick!*", we can imagine the King's men joking. There was weakness and dysfunction all around this story. The men "lodged" with Rahab (Josh. 2:1)- but the Hebrew term is often translated "slept with..." in a sexual context. In fact, whenever the term is used in relation to a woman, let alone a prostitute, it implies intercourse. As a word it does mean simply to sleep... but it is strange that no other term for 'lodging the night' is used, and that the term in the context of a female or prostitute does usually carry a sexual meaning. Whilst I don't believe the spies did sleep with Rahab, it's strange that no other word for 'lodging' is used. The ambiguity is, I suggest, purposeful. But they and their message were 'welcomed in peace' by Rahab (Heb. 11:31), she 'received' their message and justified herself by works by protecting them (James 2:25). This would contribute to an overall theme in the book of Joshua of Israel's weakness- the land wasn't fully possessed, Joshua appears himself as weak in many ways, he didn't fully follow the admittedly hard-to-follow act of Moses, Rahab believed the very words of promise which Israel didn't believe, the spies were sent out secretly by Joshua with no command from God to do this, when God had promised to go before Israel and give them victory... and yet God worked through all this. Even to the extent of using the weakness of the spies in going in to a brothel and "sleeping" with the madame... in order to save that woman and her family, and the lives of the spies, all in a manner which through human weakness glorified the God of Israel. Rahab had an extensive knowledge of parts of Moses' words and law, and this was the basis for her faith. Yet where did she, a whore in Jericho, get that knowledge from? Presumably from her clients, who would've been travellers who had heard these things and passed them on to her. All this is wonderful encouragement for all sinners- that God has a way of working through sin to His glory, and He doesn't give up so easily with human weakness.

2:9 your great name- see on Ps. 24:6

When she says that she was aware that God had "given you the land" (Josh. 2:9), she uses the same two Hebrew words used repeatedly in Deuteronomy regarding God's promise to give Israel the land of the Canaanites. "Your terror is fallen upon us" is likewise an allusion to Ex. 15:16; 23:27 [the same Hebrew word for "terror" is used by Rahab]. Rahab speaks of how her people are "fainting" in fear- quoting Ex. 15:15 about how the inhabitants of Canaan would "faint" (AV "melt away") because of

Israel. Knowing all this, she has the ambition to request the impossible- that *she* would be the exception, that with *her* a covenant would be made. When she says that "we *have* heard" about the Exodus (Josh. 2:10), she may be referring to the prophecy of Ex. 15:14: "The people *shall* hear and be afraid". In this case, her emphasis would have been upon the word "have"- 'yes, we *have* heard indeed, as Moses sung, and yes, we *are* afraid'. Seeking God's face is actually to strive for the unachievable in this life; but it's what we are to do. Spiritual ambition of the type Rahab had lifts us far above the mire of mediocrity which there is in all human life under the sun.

2:12 Heb. 11:31 comments that "By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace". Rahab's faith was faith in God's grace. For Rahab was an Amorite and according to the law of Moses there was to be no pity or covenant with them- only death (cp. Dt. 7:2). Rahab had the spiritual ambition to ask that they make a covenant with her- she requests *hesed*, the common term for covenant relationship ("deal kindly with me", Josh. 2:12 cp. 1 Sam. 20:8). And the spies made a covenant with her. Grace, like love, finds a way. Remember that she was also aware of what Israel had done to their enemies on their way to Jericho- and she appears to allude to Moses' commands to destroy utterly and *not* make covenant with the peoples of the land (Dt. 2:32-37; 7:1-5; 20:16-18).

2:21 Rahab was told to bind the scarlet cord in her window "when we come into the land" (Josh. 2:18). But Rahab bound it there immediately when they left- as if she recognized that her land was already in Israel's hands (Josh. 2:21). Considering the whole town was wondering how the spies had escaped, and she was under suspicion, to leave the escape rope dangling there, indeed to take it up and then place it there again immediately (so 2:21 implies), was really stupid. She didn't need to do that at that stage. But the joy of the Gospel should make us fools for Christ's sake. But does it, in our postmodern age? When was the last time the joy of the good news we know, lead you to do something humanly foolish? It could be gathered from Heb. 11:31 that Rahab preached to others the message she had received from the spies- for the inspired commentary there notes that Rahab did not perish with those "that believed not"- *apeitheo* suggesting disbelief, a wilful refusal to believe. What message did Jericho not believe? There was no particular message for them from the words of Moses or Joshua. The message was presumably an appeal from Rahab, to repent and accept the God of Israel as she had done- to cast themselves upon His mercy. And in any case, as a prostitute estranged from her family, either due to her profession or because estrangement from them had led her to it, she must have gone to her estranged family and preached to them, bringing them within her despised house. The question, of course, is: 'Why then was not Rahab killed by the people of Jericho if she openly preached to them about the God of Israel?'. The ancient law code of Hammurabi contains the following statute: "If felons are banded together in an ale-wife's [prostitute's or innkeeper's] house and she has not haled [them] to the palace, that ale-wife shall be put to death" (S.R. Driver and J.C. Miles, *The Babylonian Laws* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1956], 2:45). Perhaps she was so despised that she was untouchable, or treated as mad. Perhaps former clients of hers in the city's leadership decided it would be better to let her 'get religion' rather than spill any beans about them. But it could be said that it was a miracle she wasn't murdered for her witness. She certainly ran the risk of it. If men and women with a far less complete understanding of the Gospel could risk their lives for it... what does our understanding and faith convict *us* to do for the sake of witnessing to it? Give money towards it? Risk our lives, health, convenience in travelling for it? Risk our embarrassment and loss of standing in the workplace or family by preaching it...? Our knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom is far more detailed than that of Rahab, who picked up

snatches of it from her clients, and had at most an hour's pressured conversation with the spies before she had to show whether or not she believed it. If it motivated her to do all she did- what about us?

Compare the evidence for Rahab's preaching the message of the spies, with the terms of the covenant thrashed out with her- if she were to "utter" (Heb. to preach, advertise openly] the "business" of the spies, then the covenant would be null and void (Josh. 2:20). She did indeed do this, and yet the covenant still stood. Perhaps the agreement insisted upon by the spies was somewhat self-protective, without the ambition which Rahab had to bring others to throw themselves upon God's grace. This would only make her spiritual perception and ambition stand out the more. All this fits in with the overall theme of the book of Joshua- that Israel were given the land, Ephraim and Manasseh were allowed to return to their lot East of Jordan, despite the fact that they were disobedient and didn't drive out all the Canaanites as required by God. Taking the crossing of the Red Sea as a type of baptism, the wilderness walk as symbolic of our probationary lives now (1 Cor. 10:1-3), the entrance of the promised land speaks of our entrance to God's Kingdom- and this will likewise be by grace, in the face of all the mess ups, disobedience, failure to obey... which we're all so guilty of.

3:1 *Rose up early*- In the days before alarm clocks, special note is taken of this feature of Joshua (6:12; 7:16; 8:10).

3:1 *Lodged there* - In full view of Jericho, this would have been a tactical mistake, humanly speaking. Far better, surely, a quick attack by an advanced guard of soldiers, rather than taking the whole nation over Jordan in full view of their enemies waiting for them.

3:2 The three days spent looking at Jordan was perhaps to encourage them to meditate upon the Red Sea deliverance and to help them make the move in faith. Humanly speaking, sitting there in full view of the men of Jericho was unwise.

Jericho was protected from the oncoming Israelites by the Jordan river. Rahab mentioned to the spies that the men of Jericho were terrified at the way Israel's God had dried up the Red Sea (Josh. 2:10), implying that they believed Yahweh could likewise dry up the Jordan and take away their line of natural defence. Perhaps Joshua and Caleb envisaged the drying up of the Jordan as already in essence accomplished when they reasoned that their defence [the Jordan] was departed / held up / turned off from them (Num. 14:9). The whole situation was a purposeful repetition in essence of the Red Sea crossing. Circumstances repeat in life so that we learn faith from the previous incident, at least potentially. 1:11 had foretold they would pass over the river, but they had to go forward in faith not knowing how exactly that would work out in practice. Once they had gone over Jordan, they were entering a hostile country from which there would now be no retreat. This is hinted at in the descriptions of Israel not only passing over but totally passing over (3:17; 4:1). This is the way God works- if we go forward in faith, then the way back to the world is harder. Joshua therefore encouraged them that when God drove back the river it would be as if He had stretched out His hand to strike all the inhabitants of the land (Dt. 7:1). The wonder of our baptism implies that all future conflicts and obstacles to entry to the Kingdom will likewise be overcome.

Instead of following the pillar of cloud and fire they had to follow only the ark. The miraculous

presence of the fire and cloud was now removed- that had trained them to follow God's leading even when now there was no miraculous sign. Ex. 15:15-17 had reasoned that a division of the waters immediately prior to Israel's entry into Canaan would make the Canaanites fear Israel. There was therefore the hint that a drying up of the Jordan would happen- Joshua seems to have imagined it would, but only the spiritually minded amongst Israel would've grasped the hint from Ex. 15:15-17. This is typical of how God works- those who love His word find hints and encouragements for their faith when facing specific obstacles. Those who are not sensitive to God's word or who are ignorant of it don't find this same encouragement. Hence when Is. 64:3 comments that God did great things for Israel which they "looked not for"- this is an expression of His grace towards the less spiritually perceptive. They should have 'looked for' this miracle- but even although they did not, God still did it. This is comfort, although not without limit, to those who still wonder how and whether they shall pass over to be in God's Kingdom.

3:4 *Two thousand cubits* - Nearly one kilometer. The ark was as it were able to protect itself, without the need of being guarded by soldiers- in fact it was the unguarded ark which was itself a guard to them. In this lies a caveat about 'apologetics' and the idea of defending God and His Truth. He doesn't need it, and so much damage has been done by those who think that somehow, His Truth and glory depends upon them to preserve it. The distance from the ark was to also focus their attention upon it as the means of their crossing over the river- just as our crossing into the Kingdom will be made with total focus on the person of Jesus as our Saviour.

3:7 Just as Moses was accredited in the sight of the people by the miraculous division of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:31), so Joshua was accredited. Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea with his rod; Joshua was to do the same to the Jordan with the ark of the covenant. Both times they passed over "on dry ground" (3:17).

3:11 It could be rendered "the ark of the covenant is called the ruler of the whole earth"- as if the ark is personified, encouraging us to see it as representative of a person (the Lord Jesus).

Passes over- Israel had been taught throughout their wilderness journey that they were 'passing over', the word is used so often in Deuteronomy about their passing through various places on the journey. The fact God has brought us over so much day by day in this current journey means that our final crossing over at judgment day into God's Kingdom will just be another stage in the journey, seamlessly part of the process we are currently experiencing, and we should not therefore see judgment day as some huge unknown factor which lies inexorably ahead. They had been taught to speak to others of how they were to pass over Jordan (e.g. Dt. 2:29 "as the children of Esau who dwell in Seir, and the Moabites who dwell in Ar, did to me, until I shall pass over the Jordan into the land which Yahweh our God gives us"; see too Num. 33:51; 35:10; Dt. 4:22,26 "you shall pass over this Jordan"; 9:1; 11:31; 12:10 "when you pass over Jordan"; 27:2,4,12; 30:18; 31:13; 32:47). That's a total of 14 times that they were specifically told they were to pass over Jordan, corresponding to the endless Biblical encouragement we receive that really, we shall inherit the Kingdom. Even if like Israel the words can appear to just drone on in our ears. We too are to live with the full assumption [not presumption] that by grace we shall enter and inherit the Kingdom. The 'passing over' of the ark was to be seen by them as a guarantee that they too would pass over Jordan, just as we are to see in

the resurrection of the Lord and His passing over into Divine nature the guarantee of our personal salvation. The Lord's resurrection thereby becomes utterly central to our assurance of salvation if we are indeed 'in Him'. The 2000 cubits distance may be a hint at the Lord 'passing over' 2000 years ahead of us doing so at judgment day. Note that the Hebrew for 'passed over' is also translated 'to carry over' (e.g. Josh. 4:3,8)- they were carried over by God just as we will be.

3:11-13- see on Zech. 4:14

3:13 *Cut off* - A direct allusion to the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 15:8).

3:15 *Overflows her banks* - Ps. 114:5 and Is. 43:2 reason that what God did at the Jordan He does in essence in *our* lives. God made the people cross Jordan at the time when it was widest- an example of how (at some times, in some ways) He purposefully tests faith. To cross the Jordan in flood was a heroic and very difficult act, according to 1 Chron. 12:15. Likewise God chose their crossing place as facing Jericho ("right against Jericho", :16)- the strongest opponent, whose spies no doubt were nervously watching the Israelites. Ps. 93:3,4 refer to how the floods lifted up their voice, but God's people walked through them- this is more relevant to the Jordan crossing than to the Red Sea exodus. Jordan is widest after the Spring snow melt in the Lebanon mountains- incidental proof that they crossed Jordan around Passover time, which is when they had crossed the Red Sea. God arranged circumstances so that they could see the similarities with the Red Sea crossing, and learn from that incident now that the circumstances were repeating. God does the same with us, daily; repeating circumstances, and trying to get us to see how in essence our experiences are repeating Biblical experiences. All the promises that Israel would enter Canaan actually implied this miracle- but it was for the thoughtful Israelite to perceive that.

3:16 *A heap*- Presumably they froze and congealed, as perhaps happened at the Red Sea.

3:16 The language of waters divided and gathered together recalls the language of creation (Gen. 1:6,9). Allusions to creation language are frequent in the Bible, to encourage us that what God did then and continues to do in creation, He does in our lives. The new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) involves the same expenditure of energy to create *ex nihilo* the spiritual person within us.

4:21 Quoting / alluding to Moses- as Joshua often does

Everything about the battle plan was somehow humanly foolish- to yet again attempt to teach Israel, old and new, that victory comes from following God's way, and His way is humanly foolish. The warriors were circumcised before the battle (Josh. 5:2)- and we know from the Biblical record of Shechem how this would've weakened the men- for this was only a week or so before the battle. The manna wasn't phased out- it stopped abruptly just before the battle of Jericho (Josh. 5:12). The people would likely have been short of food, and would've been dealing with the problems associated with a new diet- after 40 years! Walking around the city seven times, starting at dawn, would've made the people tired. There was no advantage of shock or surprise by doing this. Planning the final assault for late afternoon was hardly smart either- humanly speaking! But all this was- and

is- to teach God's people that victory *His* way involves shedding our human strength, just as Gideon was likewise taught so dramatically.

As Israel were called to follow the Angel after their Red Sea baptism, so we too follow where the Angel leads. The conquest of Jericho is a classic example of following the Angel. Josh. 5:13 speaks of the Angel who was the commander of *Yahweh's* army appearing to Joshua, the commander of God's human army on earth, and standing "over against him", i.e. dead opposite him. Clearly enough, Joshua was being shown that he had an opposite number in Heaven, a representative there before the throne of God- just as each of us do. Note in passing how the Angel answers Joshua's question- 'Are you for me, or against me?'. God has no interest in taking sides in human arguments, demonizing the one side and glorifying the other. The response was simply that the Angel stood for God and was His representative (Josh. 5:14). Religious people so easily fall into this trap of demonizing their enemies, on the basis that "God is with me, and therefore, not with you my opponent, in fact, He hates you because I hate you". The true God and His Angelic servants are far above this kind of primitive, binary dichotomy.

5:13,14 Is this a rebuke of Joshua, wanting to boil everything down to black and white, wanting to see God as either personally for him or against him; when the essence is to seek to discern and do God's will. Joshua was very good at obedience to clear commandments (Josh. 4:10,17; 8:27; 10:40). But when he had to articulate his faith in God in unexpected situations, e.g. when the ambassadors from Gibeon arrived, or when the first attack on Ai failed, he seems to have performed poorly. Legalistic obedience is no use in those cases when principles need to be applied. Josh. 5:13,14 can be read as a rebuke of Joshua, wanting to boil everything down to black and white, wanting to see God as either personally for him or against him; when the essence is to seek to discern and do God's will. He very strictly adhered to God's commandments with legalistic obedience, e.g., about how to approach and deal with Jericho, or how to cross the flooded Jordan and build an altar; and time and again, we read in Joshua of how he strictly relayed and obeyed the Divine commandments given by Moses (Josh. 8:31,33,35; 11:12,15,20; 14:2,5; 17:4; 21:2,8). Yet as with any literalistic or legally minded person, it was hard for Joshua to apply the principles behind the laws to situations which weren't specifically addressed by Divine revelation, where legalistic obedience wasn't what was required.

The Angels formulate their plans perhaps without knowing whether we will respond suitably to enable the plans to go ahead, or maybe they arrange circumstances whether they know we will obey or disobey, so that we always have the encouragement that if we obey and do our part we will have the pre-arranged workings of the Angels behind us too. The entrance of Israel to Canaan shows this. God had promised in Ex. 33 to send an Angel before them which would drive out the tribes from Canaan; the 'Hornet'- a result of Angelic activity- was sent before them to do the same (more proof of this provided later). Dt. 9:3 describes this: "The LORD thy God is He which goeth over (the Jordan) before thee; as a consuming fire (the language of Angels- Ex. 24:17) He shall destroy them (the nations). . so shalt thou drive them out". Thus when Joshua approached Jericho to attack it "there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. . and He said. . As captain of the host of the Lord (Angels) am I come" (Josh. 5:13,14). So in prospect the Angels drove out every tribe that was in the land; the people of Israel had to just go in and possess the work which the Angels had done. So when they failed to drive out certain tribes, this was an example of human failing to be "workers together with God". Thus in prospect, the Angels led them to the promised

"rest"- Dt. 25:19; Josh. 1:13; Is. 63:1 N.I.V. ; although in practice they did not enter that rest because of their faithlessness (Heb. 3:11-4:11), despite the Angel promising He would lead them there- "I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33:4). Was this due to the Angel over-estimating the spiritual strength of His charges? See on Rev. 21:12

5:15- see on Dan. 8:11

5:15 the command to remove his shoe from holy ground. This is evidently reminiscent of the command to Moses in a similar situation. Shouldn't Joshua have perceived this, seeing his life was so clearly framed after that of Moses?

Following the Angel is the theme that lies behind God's statement that because He had already given Jericho to Israel, therefore they should arise and take it. So many victories have been prepared for us in prospect- against addictions, engrained weaknesses of character, habits, impossible situations. Israel had to follow the ark, where the Angelic presence of God was (Josh. 6:2 cp. 6:8). The people were to go up into Jericho "straight before them" (Josh. 6:5,20), just as the Cherubim-Angels have "straight feet" (Ez. 1:7,9,12). They were to follow in the Angel's steps.

Josh. 6:10, "You shall not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let a word proceed out of your mouth, *until* the day I tell you, 'Shout!'", implies that the people maybe didn't know the battle plan- each day they would've walked around the city in silence, and nothing happened. The command to "Shout!" didn't come- for six days. The whole exercise was surely to develop their faith. Again, this was the most crazy of battle plans, in human terms. Heb. 11:30 associates the circling of the walls with faith: "by faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been circled seven days". 2 Cor. 10:3-4 is perhaps an allusion to the way that Jericho was taken with such a humanly weak battle plan: "for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ". The point of the allusion is for us to see ourselves as those nervous Israelites desperately clinging on to their faith in God's victory rather than human strength. And we each have our Jerichos- habits, life-dominating patterns of thinking, that seem so impossible to shift.

The deliverance at the Red Sea had been intended to teach Israel these very lessons. And the account of the fall of Jericho is recorded in similar language, in order to teach the same lesson. Rahab's house had to be identified by a scarlet cord- like the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled on the two doorposts and lintel of the Israelites' homes in Egypt. The silence demanded of the people in Josh. 6:10 was surely to recall Ex. 14:14, there the people standing before the Red Sea were assured: "The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent". Compare the command to keep silent whilst *Yahweh* fought, with the common practice of yelling war cries as an ancient army approached their enemy. All human convention, wisdom and strength, was placed in purposeful opposition to what seemed quite counter-instinctive- to be utterly silent whilst *God* did the fighting.

6:11 There's a distinct theme in the record that actually, God's people didn't do according to His ideal plan, and yet still He gave them the victory. One wonders whether the comment that "So the ark of the Lord compassed the city" (Josh. 6:11) could imply that the entire fighting force of Israel didn't bother doing as commanded on the first circuit of the city- possibly they just sent the ark around it. The people were to shout when the trumpets sounded (Josh. 6:10). But in reality, like a

Sunday School play gone wrong, the people shouted, the trumpets sounded, and then the people again shouted (Josh. 6:20).

6:16 The command to "shout" was a reflection of the belief Israel were to have in the fact that God *had already* given them the city- for the Hebrew for "shout" usually refers to a shout of victory. The word is translated "... will I triumph" in Ps. 60:8; 108:9. The same idea of shouting in victory over a city which has been given to God's people recurs in Jer. 50:15- "Shout against her round about [cp. compassing the walls of Jericho]... her foundations *are* [present tense] fallen, her walls [cp. Jericho's] *are* thrown down". And this speaks of our latter day victory against Babylon- thus making the whole account of earnest relevance to us who live in the last days, and who will see Babylon fall by faith. Notice how literal Babylon fell by the water of the river being dried up, and the walls being opened- just the same sequence of events that occurred at Jericho.

6:20 - see on Rev. 21:12; Josh. 6:11

6:24- see on Jud. 1:8

6:24 1 Cor. 3:12-15 likens all the faithful to material which can pass through the fire of judgment- and this surely is a reference to the way that Jericho was burnt with fire, and only the metals along with Rahab and her family came through that fire to salvation. Thus according to the allusion, Rahab and her family represent all the faithful.

6:26 Was this unnecessarily extreme?

7:3-5 Shouldn't Joshua have led them into battle in person (1:5); he did the second time they attacked Ai (8:15)

7:7,8- he lost faith in the promise of 1:5-7,9

7:10,11,13 He is being reminded not to just see himself as part of a community, but to remember his personal relationship with God, and not to have such a low self image

If Canaan is seen to represent the Kingdom, the things which are stopping us entering the Kingdom are our sins. In prospect, Jesus, the antitype of the great Angel which lead Israel into the land and drove out the enemies in prospect, has vanquished all our sins. When Israel sinned, the help the Angels were giving Israel to help them possess what they had already prepared for them, was taken away. Thus with the first attack on Ai, the Angels had in prospect driven out the people of Ai, but the realisation of that was conditional on Israel's obedience. "Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I (God manifested through the Angel) be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you"(Josh. 7:12).

7:19 He correctly perceives that repentance is a giving of glory to God's Name

8:1 dismayed- he lost faith in 1:3,9

8:5,6 Fleeing before their enemies was perhaps a recognition of the truth of Dt. 28:25

8:8- see on Jud. 1:8

8:26 Given the similarities with the battle against Amalek, were his arms held up in fervent prayer? This is a common association with upholding arms. Moses held his hand up, and Joshua led the army into battle, succeeding because Moses had his hands held up in prayer (Ex. 17:10). Now, Joshua is the one holding his hands up in prayer, whilst Israel are in battle. Lesson: We go through experiences which later repeat; and we are in the position of those who had before prayed for us, and are expected to replicate their examples. 8:31,35- exact obedience

- When Joshua was leading the Israelite army, he was given victory because Moses kept his arms outstretched in prayer. Later, circumstances repeated, so that Joshua had the opportunity to make the same effort for others as had been made for him. For Joshua had to keep his hand stretched out, until his men had destroyed all the men of Ai (Josh. 8:26). And throughout life, this occurs for us- a situation wherein we were shown grace repeats, in essence, so that we have a chance to show the same grace to others which we received.

9:14-18 Too influenced by his 'committee'?

9:26 Integrity?

10:8 Lack of faith in 1:5?

10:12 Amazing faith in prayer; he commanded things to happen, so sure of the prayer being heard.

As Joshua had been told to be strong good courage in order to take the land, so he had to tell others (Josh. 10:25).

Joshua had taken Hebron (Josh. 10:36) but Israel had not followed up his victory, and the Philistines had returned; Caleb then took it (Josh. 15:13), but again, by Samson's time, the Philistines were back.

11:6,14- lack of faith in 1:9?

11:11- see on Jud. 1:8

11:15- see on Dt. 18:18

11:15,23 Strict obedience to commands

11:23 13:1; 16:10; 18:3; 23:4 Much land was still not possessed; does 11:23 therefore imply that the land had been possessed only in the perceptions of Israel? How responsible was Joshua for this?

12:1 *Kings of the land* - These form the basis for the 'kings of the earth' [same Hebrew phrase] of later Biblical prophecy. The reference is to the Canaanite rulers, those who rule in the land promised to Abraham, who are in conflict with Israel- rather than to literally every king of the planet.

12:2 The chapter describes the conquest of two kings (Sihon and Og) to the east of Jordan, and 31 to the West (12:24), making a total of 33 victories against the kings of Canaan- perhaps looking forward to the 33 years of Christ's life in which He overcame every potential obstacle to our inheriting the Kingdom. Their territory is mentioned in such detail in 12:2-5 because the victory against the King of

the area meant that Israel were to now go and possess his territory- but they failed to do so fully.

12:7 *Joshua and the children of Israel smote*- Note the parallel between Joshua and his people. It looks forward in type to the victory of Jesus against all those obstacles which stand between us and possession of the Kingdom. Cities, confederacies, giants, military power... all these things crumbled before Joshua-Jesus. But tragically, despite all these victories, Israel did not make good on them, and did not possess what Joshua had enabled them to through his victories.

Gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession- Eph. 1:14 speaks of our having received a guarantee of the "inheritance... of the purchased possession", language which is very much taken from these records of the conquest and possession of Canaan as Israel's inheritance (see too Col. 1:12 "the inheritance of the saints in light", "you shall receive the reward of the inheritance", Col. 3:24). The Abrahamic promises of possessing the gate of Israel's enemies had an initial fulfilment in these conquests of Joshua, just as in a sense we have in Christ already "obtained an inheritance" (Eph. 1:11), by turning to Christ we "receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith" (Acts 26:18), "an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Note that the inheritance is 'among' other believers, just as Israel received an 'inheritance among' their brethren (Num. 26:62; 27:7; 33:54; Dt. 18:2; Josh. 14:3; 16:9; 17:4,6; 19:49 etc.). This emphasis upon 'inheritance among' our brethren shows that the experience of salvation is not a totally personal matter. Salvation is collective, the body of Christ has been saved, and our salvation is by reason of being amongst that body. 1 Pet. 1:4 Gk. speaks of our perpetual ['that fades not away'] inheritance being given to us at Christ's return, although it is now 'reserved in Heaven' for us (note too Heb. 9:15 "the promise of eternal inheritance"). All this is the language of Gen. 17:8 and the Abrahamic covenant.

Unto the tribes of Israel... according to their divisions- Each tribe was divided into divisions, and each division was given a specific land inheritance within the tribal area. But it would seem they generally did not inherit as God intended. Hence Ez. 47:29 uses the same Hebrew words to describe how in the intended establishment of the Kingdom after the return from exile, the land would be "divided by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions [s.w. 'divisions']". This is how God works- His word comes true, even if His people fail to fulfil His intentions in one generation. His people in Ezekiel's time also failed, and so in essence the intention will still come true in that each of the new Israel will receive a specific, personal inheritance in God's Kingdom. That specific inheritance is *analogous* to the specific land inheritances intended for each division of Israel's tribes, but in reality the inheritance is redefined in the New Testament [see above] in terms of forgiveness, sanctification etc. This is not to say that we shall not inherit the earth, and specific parts of it [five cities, two cities, in terms of the Lord's parable], but the essence of inheritance is far more than mere land.

12:9 These kings are listed in the order in which they were defeated: Jericho first (Josh. 6:1) then Ai (Josh. 7:2) etc. There is archaeological evidence for the destruction of Jericho and Ai at this time, but not for the rest of the cities mentioned here. This was surely because Israel didn't follow up on the victories Joshua won in battle against their kings. The territory described in this chapter 12, which is a summary of Joshua's campaigns, excludes the territory of the Arameans, Moab, Amalek and Philistia, which were still part of the land promised to Abraham. God as it were reduced the territory

He gave to His people because He knew they couldn't cope with it all, and that those nations were too strong for Israel. But still, they failed to inherit all the land, as Judges makes clear. Just as God makes concessions to our weaknesses, giving us what He knows we can conquer, even though we have failed to live up to our maximum potential.

12:21 *Taanach... Megiddo*- The victory was only potential, because by Jud. 1:27 this was back in

Canaanite hands.

12:22 *Kedesh*- A number of these towns were Levitical cities and some were cities of refuge, perhaps this explains why their conquest is mentioned here.

14:14 In the context of the Angel going before the people that we read concerning Caleb that "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb... because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. 14:14)- i. e. he zealously followed the Angel which went before him, and therefore he obtained his inheritance which in prospect the Angel had prepared for him.

15:13- see on 10:36

17:16-18 He saw their potential?

18:4-8 - see on Num. 10:33

18:9- see on Ex. 32:32

19:50 Spiritual ambition

21:43,44 The Lord gave them the land, i.e. potentially, but they failed to possess it. Is this therefore an implied criticism of Joshua, or of Israel?

21:45- see on Josh. 24:17

22:2-4 This seems an over positive view of Israel, an exaggeration of their true spiritual position- cp. 23:4; 24:14,23. Or is this rooted in his love for them, not seeing iniquity in Jacob? Moses had told the Reubenites and Gadites that they could return to their possessions when "the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, and they also possess the land" (Dt. 3:20). But Joshua tells them to go to their possessions simply because their brethren were now at "rest" (Josh. 22:4). He significantly omits the proviso that their brethren must also possess the land- because much of the land wasn't possessed. Was this Joshua getting slack, thinking that the main thing was that people were living in peace, even though they weren't possessing the Kingdom? Or is it a loving concession to human weakness? Indeed, the conditions of Dt. 3:20 were in their turn an easier form, a concession to, the terms of the initial agreement in Num. 32:20-32.

Joshua didn't give the people rest (Heb. 4:8); but he said he had (Josh. 22:4). He failed to fulfil the potential of Josh. 1:13-15- that *he* would lead the people to "rest". The Messianic Kingdom could, perhaps, have come through Joshua-Jesus; but both Joshua and Israel would not.

23:6- see on 1:7,8

23:7 Don't even make mention of their gods- alluded to in Eph. 5:3

23:9,14 Too positive? Saw things as achieved that hadn't been- Jud. 1:1. He seems to have tried to perceive the promises, which were conditional upon obedience, as having been fulfilled fully when they hadn't been. Solomon made the same mistake.

24:12 "hornet" see on Dt. 7:20.

24:14 Compare his earlier over positive statements. Now it seems he came to a final sense of realism about sin, obedience and Israel's failure

24:15 As for me...we will serve. He realized that Israel, whom he had seen as so obedient, actually weren't serving God at all

When it was Joshua's turn to die, like Moses his deathbed advice was to be mindful of the Angel that was with Israel: "The LORD our God, He it is that brought us up out of the land of Egypt. . and preserved us in all the way wherein we went. . the LORD drove out from before us all the people (all these things were done by the Angel at the exodus). . He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (this is alluding to Ex. 23:21 where God describes the Angel at the exodus going with Israel as not pardoning their transgressions). . if ye forsake the LORD . . then He will turn. . and consume you" (Josh 24:17-21). These last phrases are taken up in Is. 63, where speaking about the Angel of the presence with Israel in the wilderness we read "He turned to be their enemy. . He fought against (consumed) them" (v. 10). Earlier the book of Joshua commented "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (21:45). The promises by the Angel at the exodus came true in prospect; but tragically Israel did not make them good, so that in reality only a fraction of the blessings were realized.

24:19,23 A final realism as to the real nature of sin, and the ultimate demands which God makes upon human life in practice.

INTRODUCTION

Biblical history is unlike any other national history of a people in that it seems to emphasize the spiritual weakness of Israel. The heroes are nearly all flawed- and that, surely, is so as to give us realistic inspiration to rise up to their spirit, knowing how flawed we also are. And yet there's a tendency amongst some of us to idealize these men, in the same way as the Catholic and Orthodox churches portray them as white faced, haloed saints. Judaism has done the same. Despite the evident weaknesses of Samson (and other judges, e.g. Gideon) as revealed in the inspired record, later Jewish commentary sought to idealize them. Take Ecclesiasticus 46:11,12: "The judges too... all men whose hearts were never disloyal, who never turned their backs on the Lord...". Perhaps the psychological basis for this tendency is that we simply don't want to be personally challenged by the fact that heroes of faith were *so* much like us...

1:1- see on Josh. 23:9

Insofar as Israel followed their Angel, they had success. We repeatedly read that the cities they conquered were 'sent up in flames' (Jud. 1:8; Josh. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11), surely because they were following the Angel who was himself as a devouring pillar of fire (Dt. 9:3). Yet quite naturally we balk at the height of our calling, to follow the Angel.

1:24- see on Ex. 23:20

The promises made to Abraham were made by an Angel. This is implied in the Genesis account and repeated later- e. g. Judges 2:1 describes the Angel which led the people of Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan reminding them of "the covenant which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break My covenant with you". Thus when we read passages talking of the covenant God made with

them and with Abraham, let us watch out for further allusions to Angelic work. When we read of God breaking His covenant, are we to understand that the Angels can speak like this, but God Himself doesn't and can't? Or that God has such passion and emotion that He *can* say 'contradictory' things like this?

2:1 never break- see on Zech. 11:10,11

4:5- see on Jer. 23:18,22

Deborah in Jud. 4:14 quotes the words of Dt. 9:3 concerning the Angel going before Israel to drive out the nations to Barak, to inspire him with courage in fighting them: "And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?"(quoting Dt. 9:3). She recognized that the work the Angels did when they went out many years ago to do all the groundwork necessary for Israel to destroy all the tribes of Canaan was done for all time. It was not too late to make use of that work by making a human endeavour in faith. So with us, the smaller objectives in our lives as well as our main goal of reaching the Kingdom have all been made possible through the work of Christ and the Angels in the past. Deborah's recognition of this is shown in her song- Jud. 5:20: "They (the Angels) fought from Heaven; the stars (Biblical imagery for Angels) in their courses fought against Sisera". In passing, note that the Hebrew for 'courses' is almost identical with that for 'ladder' in the account of Jacob's vision of a ladder of Angels. Strong specifically defines it as meaning 'staircase'.

4:14 see on Ex. 14:24

In Jud. 5:19,20 Israel's fighting is paralleled with the Heavens and stars [=Angels] fighting for them. The Lord of Hosts of Angels was working in tandem with the hosts of Israel. And it's the same for the new Israel. Heb. 12:22 speaks of how we, the hosts of the church, are paralleled with hosts of Angels: "...to innumerable hosts, the general assembly of angels, and the church of the firstborn" (RVmg.).

5:20- see on 4:14

6:11- see on Jer. 23:18,22

The Angel assured Gideon that "Yahweh is with *you* [singular]"; and yet Gideon seems to have intentionally misunderstood this by arguing back that if Yahweh is really with *us*, then why are they suffering so much (Jud. 6:12,13). He flinched at the personal call of his Angel to action- just as we can, seeking instead to take refuge behind the community. Yet God Himself turns to Gideon and bids him "go in the strength of this one"- the Hebrew grammar referring to the Angel. Robert Boling comments: "The referent of "this one" is the Yahweh envoy [i.e. the Angel], presumably in his capacity as commander of Yahweh's army". And this is the same call to us- to go in the strength of the Angel which goes before us, and seek to replicate Him, Heaven's plan for us, on this earth. And God backed up this call to Gideon to follow the Angel by saying he should go out in faith, "because Ehyeh is with you" (Jud. 6:16)- a direct quotation from the Angelic manifestation to Moses in Ex. 3:12. It's an interesting exercise to follow the parallels between the Angelic commander of Yahweh's armies, and Joshua as the human commander of them on earth. And one doesn't have to be a military leader in iron-age Israel to feel that same call to follow the Angel.

Gideon was bidden rise up to the example of Moses- for there were many similarities between his call by the Angel, and the Angelic calling which Moses received at the burning bush. Thus Gideon was called to follow the Angel in faith, "because Ehyeh is with you" (Jud. 6:16)- a direct quotation from the Angelic manifestation to Moses in Ex. 3:12. And yet he responds: "Alas! For I have seen Yahweh's envoy face to face!" (Jud. 6:22). Gideon knew full well that Moses had seen the Angel "face to face" (Dt. 34:10). Gideon's fear is therefore rooted in a sense that "No! I'm simply *not* Moses!". And it's the same with us. We can read of all these reasons to believe that Moses is really our pattern, and respond that "No! This ain't me...". But there, in the record of Gideon and his success, lies our challenge to rise up to the spirit of Moses.

6:18- see on 13:15

7:3 - see on 1 Sam. 14:10-20.

7:10,11 - see on 1 Sam. 14:10-20.

7:12 Gideon was Saul's hero-see on 1 Sam. 14:28,31.

7:14 - see on 1 Sam. 14:10-20.

7:22 - see on 1 Sam. 14:10-20.

The Ephraimites came over as offended because they weren't invited to fight in a battle, even though they had shown no inclination; and they did this with both Gideon and Jephthah (Jud. 8:1; 12:1)

9:17- see on 1 Sam. 19:5.

9:23 see on 1 Kings 22:22

12:1 see on 8:1

Samson lived at a time when Israel were hopelessly weak. His great desire was to do the work of the promised seed, who would save Israel from their enemies. He resented the Philistine domination and sought, single-handed, to overcome it in faith, not only for himself, but for his weaker brethren. As predestiny would have it, in recognition of his zeal for these things, he came from Zorah (13:2), 'the hornet'- a symbol of the Divine power that would drive the foreign tribes out of the land, as Samson dedicated himself to do (Dt. 7:20). And his father's name, Manoah, meant "rest" , or inheritance (cp. Josh. 1:13,15). Samson-ben-Manoah was therefore Samson, the son of the promised inheritance.

God only " *began* to deliver" them through Samson (13:5), although the potential was there for total deliverance (2:16,18). God worked both for and against Israel at this time, in reflection of how Samson their intended Saviour had a similar struggle between the Spirit and flesh, never completely coming down on the side of either.

Although he was to be the beginning of serious deliverance of Israel from the Philistines (13:5), the whole story of Samson is prefaced by the fact that during the 40 years of Samson's' ministry (15:20 + 16:31), " the Lord delivered (Israel) into the hand of the Philistines" (13:1). It is emphasized in 14:4

that " at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel" ; and the men of Judah chode with him: " Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?" (15:11). The point is hammered home in 15:20: " He judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years" . God's intention was that Samson was to deliver Israel from the Philistines; but somehow he never rose up to it. They remained under the Philistines, even during his ministry. He made a few sporadic attempts in red hot personal zeal, confirmed by God, to deliver Israel. But he never rose up to the potential level that God had prepared for him in prospect. And yet for all this, he was accepted in the final analysis as a man of faith. It may be possible to understand that the breaking of his Nazariteship was yet another way in which he never lived up to his God-given potential. He was " a Nazarite unto God from the womb to the day of his death" (13:7). Yet he broke the Nazarite vow by touching dead bodies and having his hair shaven (Num. 6:6). This may mean that he chose to break God's ideal intention for him, to take a lower and lower level of service to God until actually he had slipped away altogether. However, it may be that God counted *his desire* for the high standard of Nazariteship to him. He saw him as if this never happened, in the same way as He saw Abraham as if he had offered up Isaac, even though ultimately he didn't (Heb. 11:17; James 2:21). Intention, not the human strength of will to do the act, seems to be what God earnestly looks for. As a final note on the aim and purpose of Samson's life, reflect how the Angel declared that he would "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Jud. 13:5). Yet he died with the Philistines firmly in control over Israel. This was potentially possible in the Angelic plan; but he didn't live up to what had been made possible in prospect. Significantly, Samson's mother omitted to repeat this part of the Angel's conversation when she relayed the incident to her husband (Jud. 13:7)- perhaps because she didn't believe that her child would be capable of this. And perhaps this was a factor in his failure to achieve what God had intended for him.

He was a Nazarite to God (i.e. in God's eyes?) all his life (13:7)- although he broke his Nazariteship by contact with dead bodies (14:19; 15:15 cp. Num. 6:6) and probably by drinking wine at his wedding (14:10 " feast" = 'drinking', Heb.). This was not only imputed righteousness, but God counting the essential intentions of a weak willed man to him as if he had actually achieved what he fain would do.

The record of Samson's birth frequently uses the phrases " the man" and " the woman" (e.g. 13:10,11), as if to send the mind back to Eden- with the implication that Samson was the seed of the woman, in type of Christ. " The woman" is a phrase nearly always associated in Scripture with the birth of someone who was to be a seed of the woman. " Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware" , coming from the mouth of an Angel (13:13), surely confirms the Eden allusions.

The record of Samson has a large number of these repetition in Biblical narrative. They are situations where he was connected into the experience of those who had gone before- e.g. Manoah's desire to detain the Angel (13:15 cp. 6:18; Gen. 18:5)

Manoah's desire to detain the Angel and offer sacrifice (13:15) was exactly that of Gideon (6:18). His belief after he had seen the Angel ascend (13:20 = 6:21), and his subsequent fear, were again expressed in the words of Gideon (13:21,22 cp. 6:22). As Gideon was, perhaps subconsciously, the hero of Manoah, so Samson followed his father's spirituality in this. It seems he lived out parental expectation, and imbibed the spirituality of his father without making it his own. Born and raised believers, beware.

13:18- see on Is. 9:6

" Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" (13:18) is exactly the Angelic words to Jacob (Gen. 32:29). Their subsequent fear (13:22), cp. Gen. 32:20. See on 14:12

"The angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. *Then Manoah knew that he was the Angel of the Lord*" (Jud. 13:21). It was the very absence of God's direct appearance in his life that in the end persuaded Manoah that truly, he did have a fully valid relationship with Him.

" The child grew, and the Lord blessed him" (13:24 cp. Samuel, John, the Lord Jesus- all chosen from the womb)

13:24 It is even possible that his parents had elements of weakness in them; for his name doesn't include the 'Yah' prefix, and 'Samson' ('splendour of the sun') may be a reference to the nearby town of Beth Shemesh ('house of the sun-god'). It could be argued that because the father was responsible for his son's marriage partner (12:9; 14:2; 15:2; Gen. 24:3-9; Neh. 10:30), therefore Samson's father was equally guilty for Samson's 'marriage out'. Many of the commands against intermarriage were directed to parents, commanding them not to give their children in intermarriage.

Samson was possessed of a finely tuned conscience. The first instance of this is when we read how the Spirit of Yahweh troubled him (Heb.) from time to time in the camp of Dan, in the very places where his people had earlier failed to follow up the victories of Joshua-Jesus by their spiritual laziness (13:25).

The context of Samson's marriage does seem to suggest that Samson himself sought occasion against the Philistines; for the Spirit of the Lord had been troubling his conscience as to why the people of Dan had not followed up Joshua's victories, and had allowed themselves to be overrun by the uncircumcised (13:25 Heb.). The only other references to "troubled" are in Gen. 41:8; Ps. 77:4; Dan. 2:1,3. The Spirit of God worked with Samson's spirit, so that it was troubled as he went for his solitary walks of meditation. It was no accident that he was buried in the very place where his conscience was first awakened (16:31); he maybe asked for this burial place, to show he had at last returned to his innocent spiritual beginnings.

Judah also did wrong in Timnath (14:1) with a woman, and was deceived and shamed by her (15:1 = Gen. 38:17). Earlier Scripture, which it seems Samson well knew and appreciated, was crying out to Samson to take heed. But he was blind to the real import of it all.

It is emphasized that Samson "went *down*" to her (14:1,5,7,10), as if his literal descent to her in the valley was also a retrograde step spiritually. Samson's marriage was wrong. And so it was. And yet his hero Gideon had likewise 'gone down', the record emphasizes, to liberate Israel from their enemies (7:9,10,11,24). In view of the other examples of Samson consciously imitating Gideon, it is likely that he was seeking an opportunity to deliver Israel from the Philistines. And yet he mixed his motivations. He loved the girl, he wanted to gratify his flesh with the forbidden fruit. He loved the world, and thereby became in some sense an enemy of God (James 4:4). But then he loved Gideon, he loved the holiness of Yahweh, he hated the world and the Philistines, he loved Israel, weak as

they were, and wanted to deliver them from their spiritual bondage. And instead of casting him off as a man of such divided heart that he was not worthy of God's covenant love, God worked with him. And by using a purposeful ambiguity, He has recorded this for us in such a way as unites God's desire for Israel's deliverance with that of Samson:

It may be that as Gideon "went down" to destroy God's enemies (7:9), so Samson justified his 'going down' to the Philistines to take their women, as well as to destroy their warriors (14:1,5,7,10). As Gideon was somehow 'separate from his brethren' in his zeal, so was Samson. And yet Samson seems to have copied just the externalities of Gideon; not the real spirit. And therefore as Gideon foolishly multiplied women to himself in the spiritual weakness of his middle age, so perhaps Samson saw justification for his attitude. 'If heroic Gideon could indulge the flesh in this area, I surely can'. He fell into our common trap: to compare ourselves amongst ourselves, to measure ourselves against human standards as we find them among the contemporary brotherhood (2 Cor. 10:12). Saul should have realized that Samson, like him, idolized Gideon, but only on a surface level- and should have taken the lesson. But he didn't see the points we've made in this paragraph. He could have done, but he didn't bother. And so with us. The word supplies us the potential power to overcome. It can often happen that the daily readings are almost purpose-designed for our present situation. Yet if we neglect to read them- that help lies untapped.

Samson fell for the 'little of both' syndrome, justifying it under the guise of Scriptural examples. He had done this in his youth; he "went down" to take a Philistine girl for wife (14:1,5,7,10); and yet by doing so he was seeking an opportunity to slay Philistines. He may well have had in mind the sustained emphasis on the fact that Gideon went down to destroy the Midianites (Jud. 7:9,10,11,24). He went down morally and physically, and yet he justified this by thinking that as Gideon went down physically, so would he. Such is the complexity of the process of temptation. And all this is written for our learning. Significantly, the major temptations within the Lord's mind- as far as we can tell from the record of the wilderness temptations- was to misinterpret Scripture to His own ends; to soften the cross.

Samson really loved that girl (14:3,17; 15:1,7,11), even though he also hated her (15:2; he must have gone through this process again with Delilah in the time that led up to her final betrayal). This true love for her makes Samson's marriages look more questionable.

The disappointment of Samson's parents cp. that of Esau's (14:3 cp. Gen. 26:35; 27:46; 28:1)

His action was quite contrary to the spirit of the Law: that marriage with the local tribes was categorically prohibited (Ex. 34:16; Dt. 7:3,4; 1 Kings 11:2). Joshua's warning that those who married the surrounding tribes would find them "a snare and a trap for you... thorns in your eyes" (Josh. 23:12,13 RSV) was fulfilled in Samson being tied up and blinded by Delilah; and yet it also had an element of fulfillment with his wife. The similarity is such as to suggest that Samson's marriage out of the Truth was definitely wrong because it was a fulfillment of the words of Josh. 23. "Is there *never* a woman among the daughters of thy brethren...that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" (14:3) implies that she wasn't the first one; he had often got involved with Philistine girls down in the valley, despite his conscience for Yahweh troubling him as he walked alone on the heights (13:25 Heb.) Samson gave no good answer to his parents: simply "Get her for me; for she is right in mine eyes" (14:3, repeated in 14:7 for emphasis- he really did fall for the lust of the eyes). This insistence rather than explanation would suggest a bad conscience in Samson.

Likewise he crowd only shouted out the more when asked why and for what crime they wished to crucify Jesus (Mt. 27:23). The process of marriage involved Samson in participating in the traditions of the surrounding tribes (this is emphasized: 14:10,11; 15:20). The " feasting" was strictly 'drinking' (Heb.)- and Samson the Nazarite attended this. Even if he didn't partake, he was placing himself directly in temptations' way.

" It was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines" (14:4). The " he" can be read as both God and Samson; they both had the same desire, and God worked with mixed up Samson to this end. Working all this out from the evidence presented in the record is hard work. The fact a man does something " of the Lord" doesn't mean that he is guiltless. In the same context of God's deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, men who did things " of the Lord" were punished for what they did (Dt. 2:30; 1 Sam. 2:25; 2 Chron. 22:7; 25:20).

The whole question of Samson's marriage is overshadowed by the fact that " It was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines" (14:4); He used this incident to begin to raise up Samson as a Judge of Israel (2:16,18; 1 Chron. 17:10). This is surely one of Scripture's purposeful ambiguities, designed to provoke us to meditation: it is unclear whether " he" refers to Samson or Yahweh. There are a number of other passages which mention how " it was of the Lord" that certain attitudes were adopted by men, resulting in the sequence of events which He desired (Dt. 2:39; Josh. 11:20; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Kings 12:15; 2 Chron. 10:15; 22:7; 25:20). It is tempting to read 14:4 in this context, meaning that God somehow made Samson desire that woman in order to bring about His purpose of freeing Israel from Philistine domination. And yet this would require that God almost made Samson have a desire for that woman. This may not be impossible- it may be that Paul's God-given " thorn in the flesh" was a similar forbidden passion. It would be an example of God leading into temptation (Mt. 6:13). However, it is more likely that God worked through Samson's wrong desires, through his human weakness, to bring about God's purpose and glory.

14:5 When he was strolling in the Timnath vineyards, a lion came across him (14:5 AVmg.). It was only after it roared against him that the Spirit came upon him and enabled him to kill it. He had to take the first nervous steps towards that lion in faith, and then the Spirit came upon him and confirmed his actions. The fact he didn't tell his parents what he had done may not only indicate his humility, but also suggests he was not naturally a strong man. To say he had just killed a lion would seem ridiculous (14:6).

We get the picture of Samson and his parents walking the four miles down into the valley, and Samson goes off for a wander in the vineyards. The vineyard was a symbol of Israel (Ps. 80:15; Is. 1:8; 5:7; 27:2; Jer. 12:10; Mt. 21:41). This may have been already evident to Samson from Gen. 49:11; although most likely the symbol of Israel as God's vineyard was already established by his time. Conscious that Timnath was the 'portion assigned' to Dan and yet they had failed, Samson meditates there in the vineyards, a symbol of Israel, the people who should have been there. Inheriting Philistine vineyards was one of the blessings promised (Dt. 6:11) and initially obtained by Joshua-Jesus (Josh. 24:13). And yet those vineyards were now back in Philistine control. A lion suddenly appeared and roared against him (14:5), just as the Philistines later would (15:14). The lion was a common symbol of Israel's enemies. The Spirit came upon Samson and he overcame it, in evident symbol to him that he really could deliver Israel from the Philistines. There is every reason to

think that Samson appreciated all this symbology. And yet did Samson ultimately slay the lion of the Philistines and bring the promised blessings of honey to Israel (cp. Ex. 3:8; Dt. 8:8 etc.)? No, not really. He achieved some tokenistic success against their warriors; but Israel remained enslaved (15:20). He didn't live up to that potential which God had enabled him to achieve. And yet although it may seem that his life was wasted, in that he didn't really bring much deliverance for anyone- the whole process of it saved him personally. Those whose families and converts have turned away from the Faith will identify with this comfort. But whilst the above case for Samson's spiritual commitment can be made, there is evidence galore that his motives were mixed in this matter of Samson's marriage. Consider: why did he as a Nazarite go for a walk in vineyards, among the forbidden fruit (cp. Christians in demanding careers, watching television, reading novels...)? This was typical of him: a great zeal and understanding, mixed with a desire to walk as close to the edge as possible, and to ultimately have a little of both. He had a fascination with vineyards, which the record brings out. Like an ex-alcoholic staring at the bottles in the shop 'just out of interest', so Samson fooled about with what was forbidden- just as we all tend to.

God did in fact send the lion against Samson. He did this in order to go along with Samson's symbolic thoughts, and this may afford some justification for Samson's marriage. He was there, wandering in those vineyards, meditating how they were representative of the blessings which belonged to Israel, and yet they were now in the hands of God's enemies. And then, God furthers the parable: He sends a lion, symbolic of the Philistines, and Samson is given power to overcome him. And further, when Samson returned to the carcass to meditate deeper on 'the fallen one' (14:8 doesn't use the usual word for 'carcass'- s.w. "fall" Prov. 29:16; Ez. 26:15; 27:27; 31:13), "behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion" (14:8). The Hebrew for "swarm" is normally used (124 times) about a congregation of people, often God's people Israel. And the Hebrew for 'Bee' is 'Deborah', a celebrated earlier judge. God was surely teaching him that through his victory over the Philistine lion, God's people would be inspired to be faithful, and would therefore be able to enjoy the promised blessing of honey, taken out of the Philistines. Samson saw all this; for he "took" (Heb. is usually used in the sense of 'to take dominion over') the honey, partook himself, and shared it with others. In all this there is a detailed type of the Lord's representative sacrifice on the cross. On the cross, He won the victory over the lion of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8 cp. Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8 may allude to Samson's victory). This enabled us to be empowered to partake the Kingdom blessings. As Samson walked away from the carcass some days after killing it (14:8 Heb. "a time" = 'days'- three days?), with the honey in his hands, eating it and offering it to others, so the Lord left the empty tomb. The way he ate and gave to his parents and *they also ate* without him telling them where he got it from (14:9) is a clear reversal of what happened in Eden (Gen. 3:6; doubtless Eve didn't tell Adam either where the fruit came from): but here the fruits of spiritual victory rather than failure were enjoyed and shared. The promised blessings of honey were conditional upon Israel's obedience (Dt. 32:13 cp. Ps. 81:16), although granted in prospect (Dt. 32:13). Israel at Samson's time were disobedient and therefore didn't have the Kingdom blessings. And yet the whole acted parable taught that through the supreme zeal of one lonely man, into whose struggle not even his parents could enter (14:6,16), the blessings of obedience could be brought to the disobedient multitude of God's people. And here we have the essence of the Gospel.

14:8 to take her. Samson is described as wanting to "take" a wife; this Hebrew word is 51 times translated 'take away', 31 times 'fetch'. He evidently didn't intend to live there with her; he wanted her to come and live with him in the Israelite encampment, four miles up in the hills from the valley

where she lived. She was 'right in his eyes' (14:3 AVmg.) not for beauty but in the sense that 'she suits my purpose' (Heb.). The same Hebrew is used not concerning beauty but rather utility in 1 Sam. 18:20; 2 Sam. 17:4; 1 Kings 9:12. The way in which Samson set up the riddle, almost expecting that they might tease it out of him through his wife, the way in which he agreed that if they did this, he would give them the clothes of 30 Philistines... it all suggests that Samson set the whole thing up to seek an opportunity against the Philistines.

Not only do circumstances repeat between the lives of God's children, but also within our lives. We may pass through a very similar experience more than once. The human chances of this ever happening again were remote. But the similarity and repetition may be so that we learn the lesson we failed to learn; or it could even be a punishment for not learning the lessons we should have learned. Again, Samson's life demonstrates this. The lion roared against him as the Philistines did (14:5 s.w. 15:14); and not least in the uncanny similarities between the way his first wife enticed him and wrung his secrets from him, and the way 40 years later another worthless woman did the same to him (14:15-17 = 16:5,15,16). He just didn't see the similarities, or if he did, he didn't learn any lessons. Admittedly, it's far easier for us, presented with the records as they are, spanning 40 years within a few pages.

The stress is on the way in which the Spirit came upon Samson (14:6,19; 15:14), as it did on other judges (3:10; 6:34; 11:29). "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit" (Zech. 4:6) may be referring to these incidents; demonstrating that when God's spirit acts on a man, it is not human muscle at all that operates. He is even listed amongst those who out of weakness were made strong (Heb. 11:34).

14:8 swarm. Samson discovered a congregation (Heb. *'edat*) of bees- *deborim*, in Hebrew. The judge Deborah would've been fairly recent history for Samson; she would have been the heroine of anyone like Samson, who also arose to save Israel from their enemies at that time. Surely he was being gently led to reflect that there were a whole congregation of Deborahs ['bees'] around, and he should eat of them. And yet Samson went his loner road, and suffered the consequences of it- rather like Elijah, who was in denial of the fact there were actually at least another 7000 in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Or perhaps Samson was simply being asked to execute his deliverance of Israel after the pattern of Deborah, to 'eat' of her, to fellowship her example and spirit. But he chose not to 'get it'; as we so often do in the countless nudges and prods which God gives us in daily life.

The seven day marriage feast, associated with a deceitful father in law offering the sister of the desired bride in marriage (14:12), this is all the same as Jacob experienced (Gen. 29:27)- right down to the fact that the younger sister was fairer (15:2 cp. Gen. 29:16,17). Samson should have learnt from the evident similarities with Jacob; but like Jacob, still trusted his own strength. See on 13:18

They had to declare the riddle "and find it out" (14:12). This would indicate that they had to actually find the carcass of a lion with honey in it. They plowed behind his wife as a heifer, and so were led by her to Samson's secret place of meditation where the dead lion was (14:18).

His riddle spoke of how "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (14:14). "The eater" (Heb. *'the devourer'*) and "the strong" not only referred to the lion, but more essentially to Samson himself. The same basic word for 'eater' is used as a verb to describe

how Samson 'ate' / 'devoured' the honey from the lion (14:9). And years later the Philistines realized how Samson's riddle described himself: for they rejoiced that " the destroyer (devourer) of our country" was now overcome (16:24). Samson saw that through his God-given strength he could bring forth the honey of blessing to Israel.

He speaks to his wife as if she should expect that he was closer to his Hebrew parents than to her: " 'I haven't even explained it (the riddle) to my father or mother', he replied, 'So why should I explain it to you?'" (14:16 NIV). Gen. 2:24 taught that a man must leave his parents and cleave to his wife in marriage; she must be closer to him than them. It could be that by saying this, Samson was reminding her that he didn't see their relationship as full marriage; he was only using her (cp. how he 'used' a Philistine as his best man, 14:20). Yet he did what only days before had been unthinkable: he told her his finest and most personal secret, which he wouldn't even tell his dear parents. Such is the fickleness of our nature. And yet there seems reason to think that somehow Samson foresaw his possible failure, and arranged to use the situation to forward God's work. It could even be that the girl was party to Samson's plan; she may have appeared to have a genuine interest in Samson's spiritual aims. The Philistines themselves realized this when they chode with Samson's wife that they had been called to the wedding 'to have our possession taken away' (14:15 Heb.). They saw the aim of Samson's marriage: to dispossess them and take their possession for Israel. It seems no accident that he chose Timnath, 'a portion assigned'- to Israel. This was part of the land promised to Dan, but which they had allowed the Philistines to overrun (Josh. 19:43,47). And Samson would have seen himself as 'Samson-of-Zorah', the hornet- symbol of the Egyptian tribes which drove out the Canaanites in preparation for Israel's later victories (Dt. 7:20; Josh. 24:12).

As " she cried the whole seven days of the feast" (14:17 NIV), she daily " pressed him" (14:17). This is the very same Hebrew word used in many passages to describe how an apostate, Gentile-loving Israel would be pressed / oppressed by their enemies (Dt. 28:53,57; Jer. 19:9; Is. 51:13). Samson was in some sense apostate at this time, yet he had faith and was strongly motivated; and for this he was blessed by God with strength to defeat the Philistines. The daughters of the Philistines *hate* God's people (2 Sam. 1:20; Ez. 16:27,57). The Ezekiel passages stress the paradox: that Israel (whom Samson represented) loved the women who hated them.

14:18 There is reason to think that to some degree, Samson would have appreciated all this- that he was a type of Christ. Samson may have recognized the strength of the future Saviour when he gave his riddle to the Philistines. He meditated upon that dead lion with the sweet honey in it, and formulated his comment: " What is sweeter than honey? What (or, Who?) is stronger than a lion (Heb. 'the strong one'- this is one of Samson's many word plays)?" . 'Who is stronger than the strong one?' was an idea picked up by the Lord Jesus in, I suggest, conscious allusion (Mt. 12:29); although it is masked in the English text. He was the strong one who was stronger than the strong man of sin. Through His victory, the roaring lion of the devil lays dead. And in his skull is sweet honey; did Samson see in this the same meaning as David did in Ps. 119:103? Did he so understand the nature and method of the Lord's work that he appreciated that the Lord's victory over all His people's enemies would be through the power of God's word, lying there in the place of the mind of the beast He overcame? Yet Samson killed the lion himself; surely he felt that to some degree *he* was the strong man who had overcome the beast, through his application to God's word. His frequent references and allusions to God's past revelation, both in his words and actions, would indicate that he was a man of the word.

14:19 Lev. 26:3-8 had promised dramatic success against their enemies *on the basis of* obedience to the Law. The fact Samson had this power was therefore proof that he really was reckoned by God as zealously obedient to the Law; and yet he was like this in the midst of a sadly apostate Israel. I take this view of his strength. This is in itself no mean achievement: to rise to a level of spirituality much higher than that achieved by the surrounding brotherhood.

14:19 He went down to the valley of Ashkelon, the very place that Joshua had conquered but Judah had been unable to drive out the Philistines from (1:18,19), and slew 30 warriors.

He seems angry that he had let himself fall too deeply for that Philistine girl (14:19), and "utterly hated her" (15:2). And yet this human anger may also have been mixed with a more righteous anger, in that to give his wife to another was adultery, and it happened that they carried out (perhaps unconsciously?) the punishment for adultery which the law required (Lev 20:14; 21:9). He realized that the Philistines had led him into sin, and he just wanted to destroy the source of his temptation. When he slew the thirty men at Ashkelon, as he seemed to have planned right at the start in his seeking occasion against the Philistines, he was "burning with anger" (14:19 NIV). His motive was partly bitterness and the revenge of a man humiliated and deceived by a woman; but his slaughter of the Philistines was also done in faith (Heb. 11:32-34), with God given strength to confirm his faith.

15:1 As the Spirit came upon Gideon (6:34), so it is described as coming upon Samson (14:6). It seems that the incident in ch. 15, where Samson visits his wife with a kid and uses this as an excuse to kill many Philistines, was planned by him to reflect Gideon's zeal. The way Gideon brought a kid to Yahweh (6:19) may reflect how Samson came with a kid (15:1). He then takes 300 foxes and puts firebrands in their tails. Why 300? Surely this was in conscious imitation of how Gideon took 300 men and put firebrands in their hands, and with them destroyed God's enemies (7:16). The connection between the faithful 300 and the foxes could suggest that in Samson's eyes, he didn't even have one faithful Israelite to support him; he had to use animals instead.

He burnt those vineyards in a desire to be "blameless from the Philistines" (15:3 AVmg.). The same word is translated unpunished, guiltless, innocent, clean, acquitted; as if he knew he had sinned, but believed that by further fighting of Philistines he could gain his forgiveness. He had to be brought to the shame of Gaza Prison to learn that forgiveness was by absolute faith, not works and hatred of this present world.

15:5 Samson used the whole situation as an opportunity to burn up the corn and vineyards of the Philistines (15:5), in conscious allusion to how the law stipulated that a man who did this to his Israelite neighbour must make retribution (Ex. 22:5). He was emphasizing that these people were *not* his neighbours, they were not in covenant relationship, and he openly showed that he treated them accordingly. Likewise he took vengeance on the Philistines (15:5; 16:28), when the Law taught that Israel were not to take vengeance (same word) *on each other* (Lev. 19:18), but could do so on their enemies (Num. 31:2; Dt. 32:43 cp. Josh. 10:13). Note, in passing, how he set those foxes up as cherubim- a ball of whirling fire coming in judgment upon the Philistines. The fox was a symbol of apostate Israel in later Scripture (Ez. 13:4); perhaps Samson made the same connection, and wanted to symbolize how through his faith and insight, weak Israel could be turned into the cherubim of God in bringing judgment on the Philistines and deliverance for themselves. The way he used their tails to

bring such destruction may have been a reference to Dt. 28:13,44, where apostate Israel, suffering for their sins as they were in Samson's time, are described with the same word: they would be the tail of the nations. He saw that he was the one who could bring salvation and blessing to Israel.

As a Nazarite, Samson shouldn't have eaten the fruit of the vine. One wonders whether he infringed his Nazarite vows. The way he burnt up those vineyards in 15:5 may have been as a result of realizing that the answer lay in total devotion and rooting out of temptation; cutting out the eye that offends.

Samson took vengeance on the Philistines (15:5), knowing that the Law taught that Israel were not to take vengeance (same word) *on each other* (Lev. 19:18), but could do so on their enemies (Num. 31:2; Dt. 32:43 cp. Josh. 10:13). He was thus treating the Philistines as out of covenant relationship, whereas his weak brethren were all too willing to forget the fundamental difference between them.

he smote the Philistines hip and thigh with a great slaughter, alluding to the sacrifices (s.w. "shoulder" Ex. 29:22; Lev. 9:21; 1 Sam. 9:24; Ez. 24:4- nearly all usages of this word in Samson's Bible referred to the "shoulder" of the sacrifices), as if he was offering them as a sacrifice to Yahweh; and then "went *down* (again!!) and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam" (15:8). You don't go down if you are going up to the top of a rock. But perhaps spiritually he 'went down', to dwell in isolation from the people he was supposed to be judging / leading, in the rocks. Dwelling in the rocks is associated with a bad conscience in Is. 2:21 and 57:5.

15:8 "Hip on thigh" is apparently a better rendering, implying hand to hand combat. This would serve to emphasize his contact with the dead bodies, as he hurled them to the ground one by one. And yet the Spirit of Yahweh came upon him to enable this- a breach of the letter of the Nazarite law.

15:11- see on 13:5

He says that he had killed Philistines because "I merely did to them what they did to me" (15:11 NIV). There was no mention of the fact that he was seeking occasion against God's enemies (even though he was speaking to Hebrews). He passed off his actions as pure revenge- which on one level, was all they were. The Philistines had earlier said that they wanted to take Samson "to do to him as he did to us" (15:10). And Samson replies in the same primitive way: that he only did to them what they did to him. It seems that Samson spoke to them on their level. And yet when the Philistines came upon Samson, roaring against him like the lion in 14:5, God's Spirit once again came upon him in confirmation of his faith. Israel at this time were evidently unspiritual; hence they were dominated by the Philistines (15:12).

When Samson "smote the Philistines hip and thigh" and burnt up their corn, he commented that "as they did unto me, so have I done unto them" (15:11). If we ask 'What exactly did they do to him? What did they kill and burn of his?', the answer must be 'His wife'. He perhaps felt that she was worth hundreds of them, and the burning of their livelihood, leaving famine in its wake, was what they had done to him emotionally. Yet it is curious how he loved the Philistines and yet hated them.

15:11 Zorah, Samson's home town, was originally Judah's inheritance (Josh. 15:33-36), but they spurned it, and passed it to Dan (Josh. 19:41), who also weren't interested; for they migrated to the

north and too over the land belonging to the less warlike Sidonians (Jud. 18:2,7-10). Their selfishness is reflected by the way they chide with him: "What is this that thou hast done *unto us*?" (15:11).

The way his own people angrily rebuked him that "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are lords over us?" (15:11) was tacit recognition of the depth of their apostasy. They seemed to have no regret that they were fulfilling the many earlier prophecies that they would be dominated by their enemies if they were disobedient to Yahweh. The fact that Israel were dominated throughout Samson's life by the Philistines is proof enough that they were apostate at this time (13:1; cp. 15:20; 16:31).

He had to beg his own people not to try to kill him themselves (even whilst he had long hair), because he knew that the strength he had was only for certain specific purposes- i.e., to deliver God's people from the Philistines (15:12).

15:12 bind. The way they came to bind Samson has suggestions of Legion (Lk. 8:29); perhaps they considered him to be mentally ill, and attributed his strength to fits? Or worse, did they consider the work of the Spirit of God to deliver them to be that of demons? If so, Samson was typifying the Lord's later experience (Mt. 12:24-27). The way Jesus spoke of himself in this context as the stronger than the strong man (cp. Samson) encourages this view. And yet the strong man who was bound, i.e. the devil, can also be seen as a reference to Samson. Again, we are left with a difficult question: Was Samson telling them the truth when he said that his motive at Lehi was purely personal revenge? Or were they so unspiritual that he spoke to them on their level, even though at other times he pleaded with them to quit their idolatry (2:16-19)? Or were his motives simply hopelessly mixed? Within him was a burning desire to do God's work; he was the one faithful Israelite who could chase 1,000; and yet in the company of his unspiritual brethren, he let his human side come out, and wrapped up his zeal for the Lord in human terms- even though there was some truth in how he expressed it. This kind of thing can so easily happen in our Christian experience; we bring out the worst in each other.

15:14- see on 14:5

The Spirit likewise came upon him to kill the Philistines in Lehi (15:14). It wasn't a permanent strength. This is in harmony with the way in which the Spirit was used in the NT. The Spirit came upon the apostles and they were filled up with it, as it were, and then drained of it once the work was done; and had to be filled with it again when the next eventuality arose.

Samson slaying Philistines with a jawbone suggests Shamgar slaying Philistines with an ox goad (15:15 cp. 3:31).

15:15 Samson grabbed a jaw-bone and exalted that with *that* he had slain a thousand men at Lehi. This was a conscious allusion to Josh. 23:10 (and Lev. 26:8): "One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you". It could be that he counted the bodies, or counted each man he slew, consciously trying to get up to 1,000 in order to fulfill the prophecy. Samson doesn't say that he alone killed the thousand men; he did it with the jaw-bone (coming from a Hebrew root meaning 'soft', 'weak'). It has been pointed out that this jaw bone is one of the seven weak things which are mentioned in Judges as being the tools of God's salvation: left handed man (3:21); an ox goad (3:31); a woman (4:4); a nail (4:21); a piece of a millstone (9:53);

a pitcher and trumpet (7:20). God's people are likened to an ass frequently (Gen. 49:11,14; Is. 1:3; Jer. 2:24; Hos. 8:9; Lk. 13:15; 14:5). The first two references would have been known to Samson at Lehi; and he may have reflected that the fact the firstborn of an ass must be redeemed by a lamb was prophetic of how Messiah would save all His otherwise condemned people (Ex. 13:13; 34:20). Could it not be that despite their cruel betrayal of him and utter faithlessness, dear Samson felt he was living out a kind of acted parable of what was possible for Israel: that through his zeal, and in his hands, the weak people of God could achieve the great victory over thousands which Moses and Joshua had earlier foretold? In this he was a superb type of the Lord.

15:16- see on Ps. 78:2; Ps. 3

Samson's victory song at Lehi smacks of personal vengeance: there is little suggestion of the humble servant merely doing God's will:

" With a donkey's jaw-bone

I have made donkeys of them.

With a donkey's jaw-bone

I have killed a thousand men"

(15:16 NIV).

Joshua's final exhortation to Israel contains a passage which reads as some kind of prophecy of Samson. It is proof enough that Samson is to be read as a symbol of Israel: " Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses...that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you (true in Samson's time)...but cleave unto the Lord your God...no man hath been able to stand before you (this was Samson)...one man of you shall chase a thousand (cp. Jud. 15:16): for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you (this was exactly true of Samson in Jud. 15:18)...take good heed unto yourselves...else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and make marriages with them (as Samson did), and go in unto them, and they to you (cp. Jud. 15:1; 16:, where Samson went in to the Philistine women): know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you (cp. 16:20); but they shall be snares and traps unto you (Delilah!)...and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish" (Josh. 23:6-13). This passage would associate Samson's God-given strength and victory over the Philistines with his obedience to God's word. It was not that Samson was just an arbitrary tool in God's hand. We will see in our later notes that frequently the things Samson says and does are full of allusion to various passages in the Law, and also earlier incidents recorded in Judges which would have been known to him probably as the oral word of God.

15:18 See on 1 Sam. 19:5

15:18 His request for water in that dry place was abundantly answered- in the same way as Yahweh had responded to exactly the same request from a faithless Israel in the desert (Ex. 17:1-7; Num. 20:2-13). And the way he names the well after the miraculous provision of water, and the way

presumably the opened well remained (15:19), has links with pseudo-Israelite Hagar (Gen. 16:19). And yet even in these similarities, it must be noted that there was a certain spiritual culture in Samson's prayer. He didn't make a direct, crude demand for water. He placed his situation before God, and left it to Him to respond as He knew best. This is a feature of many spiritual prayers: not to crudely, directly ask for the obvious; but to simply inform the Almighty of the situation, in faith.

15:18 Samson at Lehi saw them as unclean asses; and yet he loved their women. And yet in the midst of this almost arrogance, he cries: " I thirst" , and so exhibits something of the spirit of Christ in His final hour of agony and ultimate conquest on the cross (Jn. 19:28). And yet again, it must be considered that the Lord's words there must be read in the context of His other Johanne references to thirst (Jn. 4:14,15; 6:35). He was expressing the spiritual thirst He felt, as a man on the brink of the ultimate spiritual failure, and saw this expressed in the literal desire He had for moisture. On the cross He was the root out of the dry ground. Samson's thirst occurred at a time of unspirituality in the midst of great victory. The Lord in His final spiritual crisis, feeling spiritually forsaken by the Father, fearing He had sinned (Ps. 22:1-6), may therefore have feared Samson had been an all too accurate prototype.

Samson despised the uncircumcised Philistines (15:18), as he had been brought up to (14:3). He knew they hated him and yet he loved them and yet he hated them- all this shows the complexity of human nature, and describes our attitude to the world and the things of the flesh. And yet the only real answer is to *cut off* the flesh; to gouge out the eye that offends; not to comfortably go along with the fact that we have such a love:hate relationship with the flesh. For we cannot serve two masters; we can only ultimately love one. The Lord we serve is in many ways a demanding Lord.

Samson dying of thirst crying desperately for water recalls Hagar's experience (15:19 cp. Gen. 21:19).

15:20- see on 13:5

16:1-3 The way this passage starts with " Then" is one of several classic conjunctions which occur in the Biblical record. The " But" of Acts 5:1 is another. After the spiritual and personal glory of the fight at Lehi, " Then..." Samson goes to Gaza and sees a whore. It may not have happened immediately afterwards (n.b. 15:20), but it seems purposefully placed where it is in the record. A similar example occurs in 14:19,20 cp. 15:1: after repenting of his marriage with the Philistine girl and using his failure as an opportunity to seek occasion against God's enemies, Samson then relents and lets his human love for the girl take him over, and he goes to visit and sleep with her. And again in 16:3, we see Samson repentant as he lies there at midnight, and he rises up and in the spirit of the Lord's cross, carries away the gate of his enemies. And then, " it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman..." (16:4). He simply couldn't keep up the level of spiritual intensity which he fain would have. And again, we know much about this problem . And yet Samson went to Gaza conscious that his people had failed to drive out the tribes (Josh. 11:22). Judah had captured it in Joshua's strength (1:18), but had let the Philistines return. So Samson chose Gaza from spiritual motives; and yet he schemed out his plan to enable him to gratify his flesh. But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors..." (16:1,3 NIV). If he went in to spend the night there, he presumably entered the house at around 7 or 8. He had what he wanted, and then lay there thinking, the record seems to suggest, and decided to not lay there all night as he planned, but get up and do God's work. Whilst it is unrecorded, surely there were prayers of deep and fervent repentance as he lay there? His conscience likewise seems to have struck him after he attempted to

marry the Philistine girl, and also when he burnt up the vineyards. And so again here. He may have justified his behaviour by reference back (in his deep subconscious, maybe) to how the spies sought to destroy Jericho by entering the city and lodging with a whore.

16:1-3 The incident in Gaza is evidently typical of the Lord's work. There was Samson, " the splendour of the son" , 'compassed in' by his enemies (as Christ on the cross, Ps. 118:5,10-12) in Gaza ('fortified stronghold', cp. death). Then he arose in the darkness, rendered powerless the gates of death and carried them up 30 miles to a high altitude (cp. Heaven), to Hebron, 'the city of fellowship', where the tomb of Abraham was (Gen. 23:19), and where Gentile giants had once lived (Num. 13:22), conquered by faithful Israelites. Joshua had taken Hebron (Josh. 10:36) but Israel had not followed up his victory, and the Philistines had returned; Caleb then took it (Josh. 15:13), but again, by Samson's time, the Philistines were back. And Samson, although a type of Christ, was intensely aware of all this failure (cp. how he chose Gaza and Timnath, areas with a similar history, for his other exploits). It would seem that Samson killed the men at the gates, the leaders of the city, and then took the gates with him (16:3 cp. 2). The Hebrew used for Samson 'taking away' the gates is that translated 'possess' in the Genesis promises. Thus he possessed the gates of his enemies and slew their figureheads, as the Lord did through the cross. Samson obviously saw some specific meaning in taking the gates to Hebron and the tomb of Abraham. He surely saw that he was prefiguring Messiah's work of taking the gate of his enemies, as promised to Abraham. Or perhaps he saw himself as 'in' the Messiah, and sharing in what He would do in the future. Archaeologists have found tablets that refer to the power of Baal to possess the gates of all who oppose him; and Samson evidently wanted to show the superiority of Yahweh over Baal. The fellowship ('Hebron') which was enabled by the Lord's victory should never be undone by us; He died that He might gather together in one all God's people, to reconcile us all in one body both to each other and to God. To break apart the body is therefore to deny the essential intention of the cross. There are other points of contact with the Lord's passion. The men of Gaza laid wait in the gates of the city; they were therefore the rulers? But they decided to only kill him in the morning. The rulers of the Jews decided likewise.

When Samson decided to attack Gaza by going into a harlot's house, he may have been consciously imitating the way the spies played their part in Jericho's destruction (16:1). And yet it was once again only a surface imitation. He fell for the 'little of both' syndrome, justifying it under the guise of Scriptural examples.

16:2 See on Ps. 118:10-12

16:2 The purpose of this final tragic incident was to bring Samson to a final realization that there was no third way in the service of Yahweh: it's all or nothing. The Lord worked through Samson's 'little of both' syndrome. The Lord Jesus read the Samson record this way: He recommended that we too tear our eyes out to stop us stumbling from the path of total devotion (Mk. 9:47). We all know how the story turns out. And it's one of those parts of Scripture which I for one don't reading. I don't want to go on from chapter 15 to chapter 16. I know what's coming, and I'd rather not be reminded of the whole tragic sequence. And yet it's there, absolutely for our learning. And *Samson should have already learnt*. As his first wife had vexed her with her words to tease his secret from him, so Delilah

did. As the Philistines laid wait for Samson as he lay with the whore in Gaza (16:2), so they laid wait in Delilah's bedroom (16:9). He had already repented of using God's service as an excuse for satisfying his own flesh in the incident with the Gaza prostitute. He had bitterly walked away from his first Philistine wife. He burnt down the vineyards, recalling how he had foolishly strolled in them as a Nazarite. He must have looked back and seen how he had played with fire. And now, he goes and does it all again. He goes to the valley of Sorek, 'choice vines', and Samson falls for Delilah, 'the vine'. He went down to the vineyards again; the Nazarite tried to take fire into his bosom again.

" Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight" (16:3 AV) gives a different picture: of Samson 'laying' with her as a man lays with a woman, and then getting up and going out to do God's work. The interplay between sexuality and spirituality was never stronger.

16:5 Prov. 6:26,27; 7:1 make clear allusion to Samson and Delilah, and they suggest that Delilah was a "whorish woman". In this case, her motivation for betraying Samson was fundamentally financial, apart from other lesser factors which there probably were. The bribe she was offered has been estimated in modern terms as around \$500,000 (1997). And Judas likewise went to the chief priests and asked how much they would give him for betraying the Lord. Again, Samson was a type of Christ. This all indicates the unbelievable materialism which is in our natures: to betray a good man, even the Son of God, ultimately for pieces of metal. We must have all asked: 'Why, oh why, did Samson go on trusting her, when it was so obvious she was going to betray him?'. It may have been because she was an Israelitess (even if a renegade). The way she says "The Philistines be upon thee!" (16:20) and the way the lords of the Philistines came up to her (16:5) may suggest this. Their offer of money to her was exactly after the pattern of the Jews' approach to Judas. The way "pieces of silver" feature in both records leads us to wonder whether the correspondence was so exact that she also betrayed the helpless Samson with a kiss, as Judas did.

16:5- see on 14:5

16:7 He teased Delilah to tie him with seven "withes", the Hebrew word implying made from a vine. He just would mess with the forbidden.

Samson tells Delilah that if he is bound with grass, he will be weak "like one man" (16:7 Avmg.). This is surely an allusion to passages like Lev. 26:8 and Josh. 23:10- that one man would chase many. Samson implies that he fights like he is many men; he appropriated those blessings to himself. He came to assume he had faith. Lifetime Christians have the same tendency, with the joy and vigour of first faith now far back in time. Samson had been bound before and had burst those bonds (15:13); he seems to have assumed that one past deliverance was an automatic guarantee of future ones. His great zeal for the Lord's work seems to have lead him to chose the single life; and yet he evidently was in the habit of occasional affairs (14:3 "is there never...."), using prostitutes and having on and off relationships with women like Delilah. Samson thought his devotion and the appalling apostacy of his brethren kind of justified it. Note how Timothy and Hezekiah seem to likewise have stumbled in their commitment to the single life.

The thongs burst from him as when string comes close to a flame (16:9). This is similar to the scene in 15:14, where because the Spirit was upon him, Samson became like a burning fire which snapped his bonds. In the next two occasions when Samson broke his bands (16:12,14), this description doesn't occur. It may be that although the fire of the Spirit was within him, Samson came to feel that

he, of his *own* ability, was doing the miracles: " *he* snapped the ropes off his arms..." (16:12). There is even a sense of unjustified, egoistic sarcasm in the way he gets the Philistines to tie him with flimsy pieces of grass and then breaks them off and kills them.

16:13 See on Ps. 118:10-12

16:13 He initially says: " If *they* bind me..." (16:7), but changes this to " If *thou*..." (16:13); he knew beforehand that she would betray him, although couldn't admit it to himself. And so we see the complexity of Samson's situation. It was not that his telling of the secret to Delilah was necessarily a sin in itself. He trusted her and yet knew on another level she would betray him. This is just a psychological condition. It helps explain why the Lord Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas would betray him (Jn. 6:64), and yet how He could really trust in Judas as his own familiar friend, confide in him (Ps. 41:9), tell him that he would sit with the other eleven on thrones in the Kingdom (Mt. 19:28). This was ever a serious contradiction for me, until considering the Samson : Delilah relationship in depth. A man can know something about someone on one level, but act and feel towards them in a quite different way than this knowledge requires. David likewise must have known Absalom's deceit; but he chose not to see it, for love's sake. "They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things [just as Absalom did in the gate]...but I, as a deaf man, heard not" (Ps. 38:12,13). Paul surely knew how Corinth despised him, how little they knew and believed, and as he himself said, the more he loved them, the less they loved him. And yet in all honesty he could say: "As ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence *and in your love to us*" (2 Cor. 8:7). Yet the more abundantly he loved them, the less they loved him- not the more abundantly. Yet he saw them as loving him abundantly. One also gets the sense that the Gibeonites' deception was somehow guessed by the elders of Israel, but against their better judgment they disregarded the telltale signs (Josh. 9:7). Or Amasa, taking no heed to the sword in Joab's hand...against his better judgment, surely (2 Sam. 20:10). This is a feature of human nature; and for me so far, the contradictions evident in the Jesus : Judas relationship and the Samson : Delilah relationship are only explicable for me by realizing this. The whole thing is an eloquent essay in the Lord's humanity and the depth of His 'in-loveness' with Judas the traitor. And this Lord is our Lord, the same yesterday and today. Our self-knowledge will be deepened by realizing that we too have this spiritual schizophrenia: it's not that we are spiritual one day and unspiritual the next. We are both flesh and spirit at the very same moment. Appreciation of this will help us cope with the more evident failures of our brethren. It doesn't necessarily mean that they must be written off as totally unspiritual and insincere because of acts and attitudes of evident unspirituality. The Spirit is still there, at the very same moment. Think of how Samson slept with a whore until midnight, and then in faith rose up and was granted the Spirit to perform a great act of Christ-like, cross-like victory over the enemies of God's people.

16:14 The way Samson asked Delilah to fasten the hair of his head with a nail and then try to have mastery over him is a parody of what would have been a well known incident: Deborah's mastery over Barak (4:21). This would indicate that Scripture was never far from his mind. In Samson's relationship with Delilah, he got closer and closer to the edge. Samson tells Delilah to bind him, then he gets closer to showing his hand: he asks her to do something to his hair. And then, he falls to the final folly. It could even be that after the previous teasings he left her completely (16:14 " he went away")- after the pattern of his previous twinges of conscience concerning his first wife, his love of vineyards, his lying with the whore in Gaza... But he evidently returned to her. The Philistines are

described as " abiding" in Delilah's house (16:9)- a word normally used in the sense of 'permanently living'. It would seem that Samson didn't permanently live with her, but occasionally visited her, until at the end he was happy to live with her (she pressed him " daily"), co-habiting with her other Philistine lovers. With his hair shaven, he 'went out, as at other times'- deciding bitterly that he had really had enough, and once again he would walk out on her, this time for good, and would 'shake himself' and take a hold on himself. But this time it was too late.

Even at his weakest, Delilah had observed that his heart wasn't with her: it was somewhere else, i.e. with the God of Israel (16:15).

Samson's marriage reflects a spiritual brinkmanship which was his spiritual undoing, however. For the same word is used concerning how Delilah later vexed him unto death with her words (16:16), and then Samson rose up and slew the Philistines with God's help. The same word is used concerning how the Gentile enemies of an apostate Israel would afflict them (Dt. 28:53,55,57). Yet at this very same time, Samson had faith. But there came a time- there had to come a time, for the sake of Samson's eternal salvation- when this having a little of both had to be ended.

Samson's zeal to deliver Israel was confirmed by God, in that he was given gifts of Holy Spirit in order to enable him to deliver Israel. However, this doesn't mean that he himself was a man rippling with muscle. The Philistines wanted to find out the *secret* of his strength; it wasn't that he had such evidently bulging muscles that the answer was self-evident. He told Delilah that if his head were shaved, he would be like any other man (16:17). He was therefore just an ordinary man, made strong by the Father after the pattern of the Saviour he typified.

16:17 It wasn't a permanent strength. This is in harmony with the way in which the Spirit was used in the NT. The Spirit came upon the apostles and they were filled up with it, as it were, and then drained of it once the work was done; and had to be filled with it again when the next eventuality arose. Indeed, the word *baptizo* strictly means 'to fill and thereby submerge'; hence the use of the term in classical Greek concerning the sinking of ships or the filling of a bottle. Therefore the idea of baptism with Holy Spirit could simply be describing a temporary filling of the Apostles with power in order to achieve certain specific aims. If this is indeed how Samson experienced his fillings with the Spirit, it throws new light on the way he allowed Delilah to apparently suck information out of him. She asked for the secret of his strength; he knew she would betray him; he told her; she betrayed him, which meant a group of Philistine warriors came and hid themselves in the house (full known to Samson); and he then rose up and killed them, using the gift of God's Spirit. He was so sure that God would use him in this way, that he thought he could do anything in order to entice Philistine warriors into his presence- even if it involved gratifying his own flesh. The way he threw away the jawbone after killing 1000 Philistines at Lehi may suggest that he felt that now he had done the job, the instrument was useless; and he begged the Lord to give him drink. He knew that now he was an ordinary man again (16:17).

16:17 The question arises: why did Samson tell Delilah that if his hair was cut, he would become weak? Surely he must have known within him that she would do it, in line with past experience? He went out as before to fight the Philistines, surely aware that he had been shaved, and yet assuming God would still be with him. He had come to realize that his long hair was not the real source of his strength, on some kind of metaphysical level. He saw that his strength was from the Spirit of God, not long hair or Nazariteship. He went out knowing, presumably, that his hair had been shaven, and

yet still assumed he would have God's strength. And even when his hair began to grow again, he still had to pray for strength (16:28). He fell into the downward spiral of reductionism. He figured that if his hair was shaved, well it was no big deal. He was supposed to be a Nazarite all the days of his life, and yet perhaps he came to reason that because he had touched plenty of dead bodies, he therefore needed to be shaved anyway (Num. 6:9). He thought that therefore God would accept him in principle as a Nazarite even though he had broken the letter of Nazariteship, and therefore losing his hair was only a surface level indicator of spirituality. And yet there is also good reason to think that there was an association in Samson's mind between his hair and his God-given strength. For why did he "tell her all his heart" by saying that if he were shaved, he would lose his strength? And of course, when his hair was cut off, then his strength went. Samson saw a link between being a Nazarite and having strength (16:17). When Samson went outside from Delilah and shook himself as he usually did, was he not shaking his hair free before attacking the Philistines, as if he saw in his hair the source of his strength? However, this must all be balanced against the evidence in the previous paragraph, that Samson originally realized that his strength came from God, not his hair. Whilst he even had this realization, theoretically, when he gave Delilah the possibility of shaving him, he also at this time had the conception that his strength was associated with his hair length. I would suggest that this can be resolved by understanding that although his strength was not in his hair, this is how Samson came to see it. And therefore God went along with this view, and treated Samson *as if* his strength was in his hair. And therefore He departed from him when he allowed his hair to be shaved. If Samson had really told Delilah the truth about the source of his strength, he would have said: 'Faith, causing the Spirit of God to come upon me to do His work'. Samson knew this, and therefore he allowed her to shave him; and yet it was also true that in his heart of hearts, he also at the same time believed that his hair was the source of his strength. So he was the victim of reductionism, as well as tokenism. He came to see the mere possession of long hair as a sign of spirituality. And yet at the same time he reduced and reduced the real meaning of Nazariteship to nothing. Difficult as this analysis may be to grasp, I really believe that it has much to teach us; for the latter day brotherhood is afflicted with exactly these same problems.

It has been suggested from the way the Philistine lords are described as coming up to her, and the way in which she speaks of "the Philistines" (16:18-20), that she was in fact an apostate Israelitess. And thus he justified himself.

16:19- see on 2 Chron. 33:12,13; Neh. 13:22

It should be noted that his strength was not somehow magically associated with his hair; his strength went from him because Yahweh departed from him (16:19,20).

16:19 We have seen earlier that Samson was well into spiritual brinkmanship. It had characterized his life, according to the selection of incidents the record presents us with. The sequence of events is worth listing:

Delilah asked Samson to tell her his closest secret,

then Delilah bound Samson as he asked

Samson awakes from a deep sleep with Delilah

Delilah playfully afflicts Samson while he is bound and Samson overcomes Delilah (16:19 implies this happened each time)

then Samson realizes Delilah has betrayed him

and the Philistine warriors were there waiting in the bedroom.

Then Samson goes out of the bedroom, shakes himself and kills them.

Then Delilah says Samson doesn't really love her

and they repeat the experience.

This is the classic material for love:hate relationships. At first sight, Samson appears an incomprehensible fool. But more extended meditation reveals the human likelihood of it all. She would've convincingly repented and asked for one last chance- time and again. It is hard not to interpret his sleeping exhausted with her and then the bondage session as some kind of sex game. And yet Samson thought he was strong enough to cope with it, as did Solomon years later. He may even have had some kind of desire to simply mock the Philistines when he suggested they should tie him up with seven pieces of grass. He seems to somehow have known that his first wife would wangle his secret from him and betray him, and thus he would have the opportunity to kill Philistines- even though he didn't intend to open his heart to her (14:16). And now the same happened. He seems to have known that she would betray him, although he evidently thought better of her; for he was deeply in love with her.

16:19 The shame of the final fight is graciously unrecorded. The events of 16:19-21 seem a little out of sequence. It would seem that Delilah awoke Samson, and he thought he would go outside, shake himself and kill the Philistines whom he was sure were in wait. But she started to tease him as before in their games of bondage; but this time, " she began to subdue him, and he began to weaken" (16:19 LXX; one meaning of 'Delilah' is 'the one who weakens'). " Began" is a strange translation; it is often translated to profane / humble. She spiritually abused him. And then she called the Philistines. He was powerless, physically, beneath that woman, and was therefore no match for them. The fact she was physically stronger than him when the Spirit of the Lord left him is proof enough that he was not a physically strong man in his own right. The way the apostate woman subdued him physically, in the name of a love / sex game, would have remained in his memory. He, the strong man of Israel, had been conquered by a worthless woman. His humiliation was to be typical of Israel's: " children are their oppressors (cp. the young lad at the feast?), women rule over them" (Is. 3:12). It is quite possible that Peter had Samson in mind, when he wrote of how " they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness...they themselves are the servants of corruption: *for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage*. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world...they are again *entangled* therein, and overcome..." (2 Pet. 2:18-20). Samson had been spiritually overcome, and therefore physically he was overcome and brought in bondage.

16:20- see on 15:16

16:20 The way Samson was so deeply sleeping on Delilah's knees that he didn't feel them shave him, and then he went out and shook himself (16:20; this seems a fair translation)- all this could suggest

he was drunk. There is no concrete evidence for this, but his love of vineyards would suggest he had a yearning for the forbidden fruit. He had broken the Nazarite vow by touching dead bodies, he obviously thought that having unshaven hair was only tokenistic and irrelevant to the real spirit of Nazariteship, and therefore he may have reasoned that alcohol was also another tokenism. Thus his reductionism destroyed him (almost). Perhaps it was brought about by a misunderstanding of God's waiving of the Nazarite ban on touching dead bodies; for after all, God had made Samson a Nazarite, and then empowered him to go and kill Philistines in personal combat, thereby touching dead bodies. So God waived one principle for a more important one; and yet Samson abused this, taking the principle far further than God intended, to the point that he ended up justifying sin as righteousness. " He did not know that the Lord had left him" (16:20) is the depth of spiritual tragedy. The Lord Jesus may have had this in mind when He spoke of how the rejected would not know what hour He would come upon them (Rev. 3:3). Samson went through the experience of rejection at the Lord's hands in advance of the actual judgment seat. He was set grinding in the prison- a figure which was later picked up as representative of the unbeliever generally (Is. 42:7; 61:1; 1 Pet. 3:19). He was as it were delivered to satan, that he might learn (1 Tim. 1:20); his own wickedness corrected him (Jer. 2:19). And this finally brought him to himself. His experience was a pattern for the apostate Israel whom he loved. Yahweh forsaking His people is associated with them cutting off their hair in Jer. 7:29- an evident allusion to Samson's shame. As the Philistines rejoiced over Samson and praised their god for their victory, so Babylon was to do years later, as Zedekiah like Samson had his eyes put out.

16:21 The Lord's silence was due to His complete humiliation (Acts 8:32,33). That extreme humiliation can be entered into through a consideration of Samson's ineffable shame. He was given women's work in prison, grinding at the mill, in order to rub the point in (Ex. 11:5; Mt. 24:41). 'Grinding' was some kind of figure of speech for the sex act (s.w. Job 31:10). The " fetters of brass" with which he was bound would have recalled his games of bondage with Delilah, and the same word is translated " filthiness" in a sexual context (Ez. 16:36). The word used for 'prison' means literally 'house of binding'- an extension of Delilah's house, they would have joked. One can imagine how the story of how Delilah enticed him would have become the gossip of the nation.

16:22 The record seems to suggest there was a link between the growth of his hair, and God giving him strength again. This doesn't mean that there was some metaphysical link between his strength and his hair. Rather does it show how God responded to his faith and *what was behind the growth of his hair*, and therefore gave him strength to destroy the Philistines. It would seem that Samson decided to keep the Nazarite vow again. He was in no position to offer the inaugatory sacrifice which the law required; and yet he threw himself upon God's grace, trusting that his zeal would be accepted by God; that he, the sinner and failure and shamer of Yahweh, could be allowed to make that special act of devotion in Nazariteship. And he was accepted in this, as witnessed by the great power of the death of Samson.

It must be emphasized that his strength was not tied up in his hair. He only ground in the prison a short time, until the great sacrifice was offered to Dagon in thanks for Samson's capture. In that time, his hair grew- but not very long, in such a short time (no more than months, 16:22,23). The growth of his hair is to be associated with his renewed determination to keep the Nazarite vow. He was reckoned by God as a lifelong Nazarite (15:7); the time when his hair was cut was therefore overlooked by God. His zealous repentance and desire to respond to the gracious way in which God

still recognized him as a lifelong Nazarite, although he wasn't one, inspired him to a real faith and repentance. It was this, not the fact he had some hair again, which led to God empowering him to destroy the palace of Dagon.

The Philistines didn't kill Samson immediately; they wanted to prolong the agony of his death. It was evidently their intention to kill him. Perhaps it was their plan to torture him and then finally torture him to death at the feast to their god- cp. the Lord's planned death at Passover. The great sacrifice which they planned to offer (Heb. 'kill') was probably Samson (16:23).

16:24- see on 14:14

Gentiles praising their gods, mocking Yahweh, and then suddenly being destroyed (16:24) was a scene repeated in Dan. 5:4.

Samson suddenly called up out of the prison house (16:25) cp. Joseph (Gen. 41:14), John (Mt. 14:9).

A read through all the recorded words of Samson will reveal a growing humility and spirituality. "Suffer me that I may... that I may" (16:26) reflects a courtesy and humility distinctly lacking in his previous recorded speech. His growth came to its intended climax in the repentance and final peak of spirituality which he achieved in his time of dying. Or it may be that the utter exhaustion of Samson from their afflictions (prodding with sticks?) is revealed when he asks the lad "Suffer me..." (Heb. 'allow me to rest / take a break'). The Lord's physical exhaustion, driven to the limit of human endurance, must be imagined.

16:26 God patiently worked through the weakness of Samson to achieve not only a great final victory over the Philistines, but also Samson's own salvation. The way Samson asked the lad to guide him to the pillars in the Philistine language, learnt in his mis-spent relationships with women, the way he knew the architectural structure of the Dagon-temple, where presumably he had been in his earlier love-hate affair with the Philistines- God didn't reject him for these earlier failures, but worked with him, making use of the knowledge and experience which Samson had picked up along the road of earlier failure. This is how God works with us, too- if only we would have the humility to realize it. And the least we can do is to replicate it in our dealings with our failing brethren.

16:26 Samson dying between the two pillars is broadly similar, as a kind of silhouette, to the Lord's death between two other crosses. The way the lad (also a Hebrew? for they spoke the same language?) "held" Samson's hand is significant, for the same word is translated 'to strengthen / encourage'. Perhaps the lad strengthened Samson as the repentant thief did the Lord.

16:28- see on Jer. 15:15-17

Like Paul and the crucified thief, Samson by his death came to a deep realization of the reality of judgment to come: "Remember me" (16:28) must be read in this context. It carries the connotation of 'remember me for good and therefore forgive me at the judgment' in Ps. 25:6,7; Lk. 23:46. It seems that Nehemiah was inspired by this at his end (16:28 = Neh. 13:22,31; did he too come to a finer realization of his failures at the end?). "Remember me" was a cry only used prior to Samson by men in weakness: Gen. 15:8; Josh. 7:7; Jud. 6:22 (Gideon, Samson's hero, had used it). Yet now

Samson appropriates it to himself in faith that he will be mercifully treated at the judgment. And his example in turn inspired Nehemiah. The intensity of Samson's repentance was quite something. It must have inspired Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:11), who like Samson was bound (16:21) and humbled (16:5,16,19 AVmg.)- and then repented with a like intensity. And Zedekiah went through the same basic experience, of capture by his enemies, having his eyes put out, his capture attributed to false gods; and he likewise repented (2 Kings 25:7).

He is even listed amongst those who out of weakness were made strong (Heb. 11:34). A character study of Samson must remember this about him. This could suggest that he was even weaker than a normal man; or it could be a reference to the way in which out of his final spiritual weakness and degradation he was so wonderfully strengthened (16:28).

Samson's death plea for vengeance against the Philistines for his two eyes (16:28) sounds woefully human. Indeed, the RSV and RVmg. speak of him asking for vengeance " for one of my two eyes" , as if he felt that even if God gave the destruction he asked for, this would only half avenge him. This would indicate a real bitterness, an unGodly hatred of both sinner and sin. In some ways, for all the intensity of weeping before God in repentance (16:28 LXX), Samson had not progressed much from his attitude in 15:7, over 20 years before- where he once again had admitted that his motive for 'seeking occasion against the Philistines' was partly just personal revenge. The spirit of not avenging oneself but leaving it to God to do was evidently something he never quite rose up to in his life (Rom. 12:19). " That I may be *at once* avenged of the Philistines *for my two eyes*" seems to be quite without any desire for the vindication of God's Name. Although it seems to me it was wrong, and betrayed some unspirituality, yet it is taken as the epitome of the desire of all the faithful for vindication through the coming of Christ (Rev. 6:10).

In the time of his humbling and mocking, in the wake of years of spiritual self-assurance, Job set such a clear prototype of Samson that Samson surely must have realized this, as he ground in the prison house. Job too suffered from blindness in his afflictions (Job 11:20; 17:5; 19:8; 30:12).

Job's last words

Samson at his end

Job 30:1 mocked by youth

Judges 16:26

Job 30:6 The wicked dwell in the rocks

Judges 15:8

Job 30:9 " Now I am their song, yes, I am their byword"

Judges 16:25

Job 30:11 " He hath loosed my cord and afflicted me"

In Judges 16:8 the same word is used of the cords with which Samson was bound, and which the Philistines loosed. Only a few weeks later (?) God was afflicting him through Delilah (16:19)

Job 30:12 " Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet...they mar my path, they set forward my calamity" . This indicates Job's poor eyesight and how the youth abused him.	This is exactly what happened to Samson. The lad made him dance, according to Jewish tradition, by poking Samson with sticks (16:25,26)
Job 30:17 " My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest" .	Both Samson and Job came to fellowship something of the Lord's future cross: the unnatural darkness, the pierced bones, the constant ache of sinews: as Samson ground and danced, and as the Lord heaved Himself up and down on His sinews to breathe.
Job 30:19 " He hath cast me into the mire (sometimes an idiom for prison), and I am become like dust and ashes" .	As Samson in prison came to be like an ordinary man (dust and ashes; 16:11).
Job 30:20 " I cry unto thee...I stand up"	Samson cried to Yahweh, standing up (16:28)
Job 30:24 " Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave"	Samson likewise would have come to the hope of personal resurrection.

According to Samson's appreciation of these links, so he would have reaped encouragement and hope. Job's last words were followed by a final humbling, and then the glorious justification of himself and the judgment of his enemies, to culminate in his future resurrection. One hopes that Samson saw the point and grasped hold of the hope offered. And this is not all. There were other words in Job which would have so comforted Samson at the end: " Behold, God is strong...he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous...and if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity...but the hypocrites in heart...*cry not* (as Samson did) when he bindeth them" (Job 36:5-13).

The way he chose to destroy the Philistines at the end by bringing down the posts of their temple (16:29,30) has some connection with the way he chose to take up the posts of Gaza. Perhaps he remembered his earlier failure and repentance in Gaza, and now he was back there (16:21), he repented again and wished to replicate his earlier repentance and victory for the Lord.

Samson's desire to die with the Philistines could be read as suicidal (16:30). In this case, he had elements of weakness at the end, and yet he was accepted as dying in faith. Or it could be understood that he wanted to die because he believed that through his death, he would achieve God's plan for taking the gates of his enemies. In this case he would have had the spirit of Christ.

Samson's death was died in faith, and at his time of dying he had been made strong out of weakness, on account of his faith (Heb. 11:32-34). " Let me ('my soul', AVmg.) die with the Philistines" (16:30) was surely a recognition that in his heart he had been a Philistine, for all his hatred of them and

despising of them as uncircumcised, and thus outside the covenant (15:18). It could be that he was too hard on himself. Yet Samson wanted to receive the just desert for his life: to die with the Philistines. His mind may well have been on Scripture as he died: on Joshua 23:10,11, which spoke of how one man would chase a thousand (he had earlier appropriated this to himself in 16:7)- *if* Israel took good heed to their *souls* (AVmg.). And perhaps Samson realized that he hadn't taken good heed to his soul, and therefore had ultimately been unable to chase a thousand men. And yet he died in faith, even though with a deeply appreciated recognition of his sinfulness. As with Paul and Jacob, deep recognition of personal sinfulness was a feature of their spiritual maturity. And as with Jacob, Job and Moses, Samson seems to have reached a progressively higher appreciation of the Name of God. His calling on Yahweh Elohim at the end, weeping before Him, was the first and only time he ever used that title; and the first time we actually read the covenant Name on his lips (cp. 15:18).

16:30 recalls the words of Heb. 2:14,15 about Jesus: " through death he (destroyed) him that had the power of death" . This is exactly the idea of Jud. 16:30: " Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life" . Through his own death, Christ destroyed the power of sin, epitomized in the dead Philistines. Perhaps there is an allusion in Hebrews 2 to this passage. Heb. 2:15 goes on to say that Christ delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" . Now that's packed with allusions to the time of the judges- Israel in hard bondage to their Philistine masters, living in fear, until judges or 'deliverers' like Samson delivered them from their oppressors. The same great relief which Israel felt after Samson's deliverances of them, can be experienced by us spiritually. The sins, the doubts, the fears which we all have as we analyze our spiritual standing, should melt away when we recall the great deliverance which we have received.

16:30 The final effort of Samson, both to speak and to act, bowing himself (Heb. 'stretching himself out to his full extension') with all his spiritual and physical energy: this was the final effort of the Lord. Again, we see in both how we are lead to a final crescendo of spiritual effort at the end of probation, although this may be articulated in various forms.

16:31 The way the body was taken up by brave Israelites after Samson's death recalls the action of Joseph and Nicodemus.

16:31- see on 13:25

18:30 Jud. 17-21 contain various pictures of and insights into the apostasy of the tribe of Dan, providing the backdrop for a character study of Samson. These chapters seem chronologically out of place; they belong before the Samson story. 18:30 speaks of Jonathan the grandson of Moses, and 20:28 of Phinehas the grandson of Aaron (cp. Num. 25:11), which would place these events at the beginning of the period of the Judges, once Israel had first settled in the land. Dan's apostasy is suggested by the way in which he is omitted from the tribes of the new Israel in Rev. 7.

20:28- see on 18:30

1:1 *A famine*- Because of Israel's disobedience. The idea of famine was to bring the people back to God, but Elimelech [like many people today] responded poorly to it, and went away from God's people by moving to Moab. Here he would be unable to come to the sanctuary, and his children ran the risk of marrying unbelievers; and seeing marriage required the father's approval, their marriage out of the faith reflects poorly on Elimelech as well as on his sons. So we see how sin results in Divine intervention [famine, in this case]; that intervention is punishment, but it is aimed at reformation. But it can be taken the wrong way, and people who respond poorly to it are then driven even further from God. This is the way the downward spiral works; but the *holy* Spirit likewise is the dynamic of the upward spiral. See on :13.

1:2 *Bethlehem-Judah*- They were from Ephraim but lived in Judah.

1:6 *Visited His people*- An idiom for God's action and intervention. It's clearly not to be taken literally, and likewise the connected idiom of 'coming down' should not be read literally either. When God 'came down' in Christ, we are not to understand a literal descent of a pre-existent Christ to earth; but rather, the manifestation of God in His Son who was born on earth.

Giving them bread- The implication could be that there was a famine in Moab. We marvel at how God worked to get Ruth into Israel- the death of three men, the famine in Israel initially, the spiritual weakness of Elkanah, the punishment of the family (1:21), the enduring faith of Naomi... all in order to bring Ruth into Israel. In the bringing of each person to Himself, there is likewise complex working with far-reaching effects upon unbelievers, for whom events have no personal meaning, and yet the events were for the sake of others. Thus large numbers of people suffered during the seven years famine in Egypt, with no personal meaning for themselves, because that famine was required to reunite the family of God.

1:7 *They began the journey*- It seems the idea had been to accompany Ruth from where she was living in Moab, at least to the border of Judah.

To return to the land of Judah- I suggest the book of Ruth was written up or edited under inspiration in Babylon, as guidance and encouragement for those in captivity in Babylon to return to Judah. Despite having sinned and having endured judgment for that, and despite having lost many of their men folk, Judah were to follow Naomi's example and return, taking any faithful Gentiles with them, and would like Naomi find unexpected blessing in the land, and a part in the family of Messiah.

1:8 *Deal kindly with you, as you have dealt...*- God blesses those who bless the seed of Abraham, even if the members of the seed are spiritually weak (see on 1:1). Naomi shows her awareness of the Abrahamic promises by wishing this blessing upon her daughters in law, whom she considered had been 'kind' to her sons and husband and to herself too.

1:9 *Find rest in the house of her husband*- An idiom for having a stable family life with children; note how 3:1 uses the same idiom: "Shall I not seek rest for you?" effectively means 'I will try to set you up with marriage and a family'. The implication would therefore be that the women had not had children by Naomi's sons, and they had both died suddenly. Naomi interpreted this as God's judgment upon her (:20,21). Her bitterness with God was because she felt that her daughters in law had unjustly suffered [childlessness was seen as the greatest tragedy] only because of her and her family. Naomi is effectively telling these women that she considers that the God of Israel is

responsible for their barrenness, and if they returned to their gods, and married one of their own people, they would likely have children and 'find rest' in family life. Ruth's strong commitment to Naomi personally and to the God of Israel was therefore all the more remarkable; she accepted she may never have children, that Yahweh's judgments upon His people sometimes affected Gentiles who happened to be involved... but she still so loved Him and wanted to devote herself to Him, despite His harder side. If there is really only one true God, then it is our duty to accept Him, even if we cannot attach meaning to events at the moment we experience them.

1:13 *It grieves me-* A form of the Hebrew word *Mara*. It would seem from :20 that Naomi, for all her awareness of God's word and faith in Him, was consumed by bitterness; and she publically acknowledged this. She was bitter because she felt God had unfairly punished her daughters in law for her sin and the apostasy of her family. This is so often a reason for bitterness with God- a sense that His judgments are unjust, and that the innocent wrongly suffer. The book of Ruth concludes with a happy Naomi raising her grandson who is presented as being in the direct line of Messiah. But this was a woman consumed with bitterness earlier. One lesson is that God still works with and through bitter people, even those who are angry and cross at Him. Another lesson is that in the final end, God's utter grace and love is revealed through all His workings, even if at some points during the process, His actions seem totally unjust to us. But in the final, bigger picture, we realize that this was in fact the way of Divine love and grace, so far above any human plan.

For your sakes- She was grieved because she felt that the judgments upon her for her sin (see on :1) were of such a nature that they had seriously affected these two Gentile women, in that they had been left young widows without children. The fact the two sons and husband died apparently at the same time would lead to the impression that this was an act from God, which Naomi understood as judgment for sin. The fact she retains her love of God and wants to return to Israel is therefore commendable; she responded the right way to God's intervention and judgment, rather than going further away from Him as she had done previously when He intervened (see on :1).

1:14 *Clave unto her-* The same Hebrew word used of the 'cleaving' in marriage of Gen. 2:24. And marriage has been the context of the discussion. Ruth is saying that she accepts childlessness and singleness, and in place of those things she wished to 'cleave' to Naomi, whom she saw as representative of Israel's God. She was rewarded for this in an appropriate way- she wanted to dwell under the wings of Israel's God (2:12), and He came to be manifested in Boaz, under the wings of whose garment she came (3:4,7,9).

1:15 *Her god-* Cp. AV "her gods". The contrast is between Orpah returning to *her* god [Chemosh?] and Ruth stating in the next verse that she wants to accept Naomi's God [Yahweh].

1:17 *Yahweh...*- Ruth had learnt the Yahweh Name, and

2:5 Boaz asking [in the Hebrew] *whose* is she, rather than *who* is she, might suggest it was love at first sight and he was immediately holding in mind the possibility of marrying her. It could be Ruth had the same feelings (see on 2:13; 3:2,10).

2:9 *Let your eyes be on the field-* Boaz feared Ruth would go after the young men who were his harvesters. He commends her later for not having gone after young men (3:10). It would

seem that Boaz fell in love at first sight, but the basis of his attraction was her spirituality and devotion to Israel's God (2:12,13).

2:12- see on Ruth 3:10.

Yahweh, the God of Israel- The LXX adds "to whom you have come", implying that Ruth's motivation for coming to Israel was in order to come to the God of Israel and take her place under His wings.

2:13 There's an ambiguity in the last part of Ruth's words here. It could be translated as "I don't wish to merely be as one of your maidservants" (see NEB), with the implication, however vague, that she was thinking of marriage. This was then extended into the effective proposal she later makes to Boaz (see on 3:2,10).

2:2 *Kinsman*- The idea of the returned exile being saved by a *goel*, a redeemer, connects with the frequent descriptions of God as Judah's redeemer at the time of the restoration; the word occurs multiple times in this context in the latter chapters of Isaiah.

3:1 *Seek rest*- An idiom for finding a marriage partner. See on 1:9. It was a man who sought a wife, yet the record here stresses the initiative taken by Naomi and Ruth. Jer. 31:22, in a restoration context, speaks of how "a woman shall compass a man" (AV), i.e. a woman would take the initiative. And this surely alludes to the story of Ruth and Naomi. God's people were to take the initiative with their redeemer, believing He would respond.

3:2 *Threshing floor*- Threshing floor at harvest time was an immoral place, associated with prostitutes and cheap women (Hos. 9:1). A case could be made that the plan was that Ruth would come to Boaz at night whilst he was drunk, dressed up appealingly, and sexually compromise him into marrying her. This would've been so difficult for a woman like Ruth, who appears by all accounts an upright woman- more upright, if this were the case, than her Jewish mother-in-law who hatched the plan. The suggestion in v. 4 that Ruth lay down with him is indeed vague but could well suggest sexual contact. The whole story, of deceiving a man into marriage, coming to him by night, when he's likely slightly drunk... all recalls the situation of Jacob being tricked into marrying Leah [for surely Jacob couldn't have been quite sober if he really didn't know that the woman he was sleeping with wasn't in fact his beloved Rachel]. The motif of deception appears common to both histories. The connection is heightened by the villagers wishing Ruth fertility like Rachel and Leah (Ruth 4:11). They also wish her the fertility of Tamar (Ruth 4:12)- who also deceived a man using sexual compromise. See on 2:13.

3:9 *Spread your skirt*- But she had taken the initiative and spread his skirt over herself (:4,7). She was asking him to confirm the initiative which she had taken, and to manifest the God of Israel to her, under whose wings she had come from Moab to come under (2:12 LXX). The same Hebrew words for 'spread... skirt' are those used to describe how the cherubim "spread their wings" (Ex. 25:20; 37:9 etc.). She saw God manifest in that man, her *goel* / redeemer.

3:10 Boaz here recognizes that Ruth is 'going after' him. He feels she is showing him grace- reciprocating the grace he had shown her in the harvest fields. Just as he had invited her to see God's skirt spread over her (Ruth 2:12), so she is asking him to spread his skirt over her. Her ambition in effectively proposing to Boaz, a Gentile nobody proposing herself to a man of the Jewish

establishment, is indeed inspirational. See on 2:13. The GNB probably catches the idea: "You are showing even greater family loyalty in what you are doing now than in what you did for your mother-in-law". This is looking very positively on Ruth- she was desperately poor, childless despite a previous marriage, and to throw herself on a rich distant relative in the hope of marriage and long term support was all absolutely human and natural. But Boaz, with the imputation of goodness which comes from being in love, saw her boldness and desperation in a very positive light. He liked to think of it as her showing grace to him, the old guy.

4:3 *Is selling the parcel of land*- The record doesn't hint at any contact between Boaz and Naomi. Naomi had told Ruth to just sit tight and wait and see what Boaz would arrange over the next 24 hours. We note too that Boaz didn't give the anonymous kinsman the full picture- he firstly mentioned the land for sale / redemption, and only then mentions that this would involve marrying Ruth and raising children by her in the name of Elimelech. The Levirate law only required brothers to raise up children to their dead brother. Elimelech had not died childless, so there was no legal requirement to raise up children in his name. Ruth's former husband had no living brothers. Therefore Boaz was operating according to the spirit of the law and not the letter of it; there was no legal requirement for the kinsman to marry Ruth and have children by her. But Boaz seems to be playing legal and psychological games to make the anonymous man turn down the offer of marrying Ruth- so that Boaz could then marry her on the basis that this was his legal necessity. The truth seems to be that he fell in love with her at first sight, and was going through all this appearance of legal necessity in order to somehow cover that fact. We likewise noted how he spoke of Ruth and Naomi's manipulation and desperate appeal to him for help to in fact be a display of Divine grace (see on 3:10).

4:6 *Spoil my own inheritance*- Land at that time was organized according to strips of land within a field, rather than owning a field. Even wealthy Boaz only owned part of the field (2:3). Strip farming was very inefficient; upon death, land was split up between the children, and then when they died, the land was split up even further. The anonymous man didn't want to have any more children because it would mean that what he was leaving as an inheritance would be even more reduced and divided. But because of that, he remains anonymous. He was concerned about what would happen over the next generation or so. By contrast, Boaz wasn't worried about splitting up yet further the inheritance which he was leaving- and because of that, he left an inheritance which was recorded and stretched right down to the Lord Jesus.

4:7 This custom indicates that the law of Dt. 25:9 had been somewhat reduced in severity and altered. We could read this as an indication of Israel's apostasy from God's law; or we could consider that even in Old Testament times, the essence of the Law was what was important rather than keeping the letter of it.

4:11,12- see on Ruth 3:2.

4:12 *Tamar*- Tamar's fertility was legendary because despite being in middle age, one act of intercourse resulted in her having two children [twins]. The comparison with Rachel and Leah also seems forced, because they both had fertility problems. What unites all these three women is the fact that they were sexually manipulative, and this supports the impression we can take from the record of Ruth's approach to Boaz that night at the threshing floor.

1:11 Consider how poor Hannah was driven through the sorrow of her life to coin the phrase "Yahweh of hosts" for the first time in Scripture (1 Sam. 1:11), so strong became her sense of the strength and manifestation of Yahweh in His Angels.

The close association between Angels and answered prayer resulted in many of the early believers conceiving of God in terms of an Angel, as Jacob in particular did. Hannah is another example; she prayed to the Lord of Hosts (Angels) to "look on the affliction of Thine handmaid" (1 Sam. 1:11); and the Angels are God's eyes through which He looks on us. She came to pray "before the Lord" (v. 15)- i. e. before the Angel dwelling over the ark. Angels are associated with conception- the cases of Samson, John and Jesus quickly spring to mind.

1 Sam. 2:21 describes the LORD "visiting Hannah" so she would conceive- perhaps another reference to the physical sending of an Angel as in the case of Sarah. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

Notice the fascinating repetition within 1 Sam. 3:4-6,10,16: the Angel calls Samuel's name, and he replies "Here am I". Then Eli calls his name for the first time, and Samuel likewise responds "Here am I"- insisting that Eli has already been calling him, when in fact it had been the Angel. Clearly the Angel spoke to Samuel with the voice of Eli! Could this imply that that Angel was Eli's guardian? At very least it reflects how closely sensitive and understanding the Angels are to their charges on earth- they can imitate the exact intonation of their voices! By all means compare this with how the early believers were sure that what appeared to be Peter standing at the door was his Angel- they imagined that his guardian Angel looked exactly like him.

4:21- see on Ez. 8:4

10:9 The association of an Angel with God's "good spirit" in Neh. 9:20 suggests that the good and evil spirits that troubled Saul were actually Angelically-controlled dispositions of mind, co-ordinated by two different Angels. This giving of a new heart to Saul by the Angel (1 Sam. 10:9) appears to be the basis of Jer. 31:33, where God says He will make a new Covenant with them (remember it was an Angel who made the Old Covenant also), when He "will put My Law in their inward parts. . . and will be their God" . 'The God of Israel' is an Angelic title. This giving a new heart to Israel described here and in Jer. 32:39 and Ez. 36:26 appears to be over and above Israel's personal spirituality, although as with the case of Saul it will probably be a vast magnification of some small spiritual effort made of their own freewill, as Saul must surely have had. Yet these words are quoted in the New Testament about God doing this to our hearts now (Heb. 8:10); inviting us to read the other passages in the New Testament concerning the Spirit creating a new mind or creation in us as referring to the Angel magnifying and developing the initial freewill effort that we make to be spiritual. In this light consider Acts 15:8,9; 2 Cor. 3:3; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 3:14-20. The Angels being so strongly associated with the word of God invites us to think that they act in large measure through the word in effecting this 'magnification' of our own effort.

10:27- see on Ps. 38:13.

11:7-see on 1 Sam. 14:28,31.

Saul was trying to imitate Gideon when he prohibited the men to eat anything while they were pursuing the Philistines (1 Sam. 11:11 = Jud. 7:16; 1 Sam. 13:5 = Jud. 7:12; 1 Sam. 14:24,28,31 = Jud. 8:4,5). He may have followed Samson's weak side when at this same time he demanded to be avenged of his enemies (1 Sam. 14:24); yet this wasn't Samson at his best (Jud. 15:7; 16:28).

Samuel said that to cease to pray for sinful Israel would be to sin against the Lord (1 Sam. 12:23). The need is in itself the call to prayer. To not pray for people is a sin- one of the easiest sins of omission to commit.

13:5,6-see on 1 Sam. 14:28,31.

14:7 It seems that the armourbearer was David. He and Jonathan grew up only 10 miles away from each (Jonathan in Gibeah of Saul, David in Bethlehem). In the early Israel of those days, it is almost certain that they knew each other from their youth. So it is possible to speculate that David was in fact "the young man that bare (Jonathan's) armour" in the heroic conquest of the Philistine garrison in 1 Sam.14. Note how Saul also calls him " young man" in 17:58. There was evidently an intense spiritual and physical rapport between Jonathan and his armour bearer which was similar to that described between Jonathan and David. "I am with thee according to thy heart" (14:7) has firm connection with David and Jonathan being described as having their souls knit together in 18:1. The record of David's battle with the Philistines in 2 Sam. 5:17-24 has certain similarities with the exploits of 14:8-11; as if, years later, David replicated his early adventure of faith. David already had a reputation in Israel for being " a mighty valiant man, and a man of war...and the Lord is with him" (16:18), even before the Goliath incident. This would be understandable if he had gone with Jonathan in chapter 14. His becoming *Saul's* armourbearer (16:21) would then be seen as a logical promotion from being Jonathan's armourbearer.

There are clear connections between Jonathan and Gideon; compare 1 Sam. 14:10-20 with Jud. 7:3,10,11,14,22. Jonathan's son was called Merib-baal (1 Chron. 9:40), meaning 'rebellion against Baal', an epithet for 'Gideon'. Gideon was Jonathan's hero; it's not wrong to have such Biblical heroes! See on 1 Sam. 19:5.

14:24- see on 11:11 and on 1 Sam. 14:28,31.

Paul may have had Jonathan in mind as typical of the church when he spoke of our eyes being enlightened (Eph. 1:18), using the very words of 1 Sam. 14:27 concerning Jonathan. He was a type of us, devoted to David-Jesus.

14:28,31 Saul saw Gideon as his spiritual hero, and this was a senseless, surface level imitation of Gideon devoid of spirit: 1 Sam. 11:11 = Jud. 7:16; 13:5 = Jud. 7:12; 13:6 = Gideon offering before fighting Midian; 14:5,20 = Jud. 7:22; 14:24 = imitating Gideon and his men going without food; 14:28,31 = Jud. 8:4,5; 11:7 = Gideon killing his father's oxen.

14:39- see on 1 Sam. 20:30,31

14:45 Hair- Alluded to in Mt. 10:30; Lk. 21:18. See on 2 Sam. 1:23.

Paul speaks of the church as workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1), probably alluding to Jonathan having " wrought with God" (1 Sam. 14:45). Again, Jonathan is representative of us all.

As Jonathan wrought great salvation in Israel in 1 Sam. 14:45, so did David (the same phrase occurs in 1 Sam. 19:5). As Saul tried to kill an innocent Jonathan out of jealousy of his victory, so he did David- thus Jonathan shared the sufferings of David, as we do of Christ. Another example of this will be found in 1 Sam. 20:33, where Saul tries to kill Jonathan with a javelin, as he did to David. Yet wonderfully, David seems to have counted Jonathan *as if* he actually had been the champion against Goliath; he describes him as "the mighty" (2 Sam. 1:27), using the same Hebrew word translated "champion" in 1 Sam. 17:51 concerning Goliath. Likewise Christ shares his victory with us to the extent that he counts us *as if* we were the victors on Calvary.

1 Sam. 15:28,29,35: "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee (Saul). . . and hath given it to (David). . . the strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for He is not a man, that he should repent. . . and the Lord repented that He had made Saul king over Israel". This juxtaposition of such conflicting statements seems to imply that it was the Angel who allowed Israel to have kings, although it was not the will of God Himself. He allowed the Angel to permit Israel to have a king, although the Angel later repented of this. God Himself, who does not repent, then firmly intervened to replace Saul with David.

In all close friendships there are some aspects which just could not have been contrived by human arrangement, and which add to the closeness and sense of specialness which those relationships have. There were such aspects with David and Jonathan, intensifying the love of David for Jonathan. For example, it was a beautiful coincidence that they both happened to have a brother called Abinadab (1 Sam. 16:8 cp. 1 Chron. 8:33).

16:19,22- see on 1 Sam. 17:58.

16:21 Loved him - see on 1 Sam. 18:20.

God departing from Saul may mean that the Angel physically left him (1 Sam. 16:23)- the Hebrew for 'depart' can imply physical movement (it is also translated 'withdraw', 'pluck away' etc.). At times in our lives we may feel the presence of God coming and going; the present writer certainly does. It would seem logical that such feelings are connected with the presence or absence of our Angel, although the Angel leaving us does not necessarily imply God's displeasure with us. The Angel may return to God (cp. Angels ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder) to report on His actions or to seek further commands; or they may depart from us in order to give us a feeling of spiritual depression so that our faith is tempted all the more. Job and Jesus on the cross are prime examples of this- hence the real anguish of Christ's cry "My God, My God (His Angel? see later), Why hast Thou forsaken Me?". In this case, an added trial of the crucifixion would have been that Jesus did not feel at His spiritual strongest to face the ordeal. Job explains how all things in life come and go in rhythms, and so also does our spirituality (Job 12:15; 34:29; 36:32; 39:3- the context of each of these needs to be studied to get the point). So Jesus was perhaps on a spiritual 'low' cycle due to the Angel not being with Him. Maybe Christ's question on the cross alluded back to the Angel's promise to Joshua that He would never forsake him. Joshua needed this to be repeated to him many times, implying he questioned whether the Angel really would never forsake him. Jesus maybe had the same experience- in which case the stress would have been 'Why have you forsaken Me?- when you emphasized to my great type in Joshua that you wouldn't?' It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven

and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

David And Goliath

David must be one of the greatest types of Christ. At this time of the David and Goliath conflict he was a shepherd who saved Israel at a time of dire physical suffering and spiritual apostasy. These connections alone should make us think of other allusions. The giant strongman falling to the earth because of a stone suggests Nebuchadnezzar's image of Daniel (cp. Dan. 4:1-3) and how lion and bear (17:34 cp. Dan. 7:4,5) and brass and iron (17:5-7 cp. Dan. 2:32,33) are all mentioned in the same chapter. The stone to the head (1 Sam. 17:49) must look back to Gen. 3:15, again connecting David and the stone with the seed of the serpent with the seed of the serpent. This is confirmed by the repetitious description of Goliath in battle with David from head to foot (17:5,6); which is the same word translated "serpent" and is a symbol of sin. According to some etymologists, the word means 'one who rolls in the dust', i.e. a serpent; and significantly, Goliath is several times described as "the Philistine" in the flesh it is significant that his "height was six cubits and a span...his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels" (17:4,6). The man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2 refers back to Goliath as his prototype, in which case the image of Dan. 2 and the man

Goliath, representing the seed of the serpent, a personification of sin (i.e. the Biblical devil), needed a man to stand against him. The Israelites cowered in fear, wishing they could only have the strength and courage necessary, but looking one on another and doubting his boast. How to overcome him and the evil intent of this man against God's people was what the men's conversation was about. This man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come up". They also discussed the glorious reward being given if he killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and make his father's house free in Israel" - and throw him into the sea" (17:25). But "all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid" (17:24). The man that is come up about being Israel's "champion" in fighting Goliath, rather than speaking about the Israelite army as a whole. How do we wish for of our feelings in the struggle against sin? There seems a similarity here with men and Angels who are to look upon or open the book of life (Rev. 5:3-5)- until our Lord prevailed on the cross. 'Golgotha' meaning 'The place near Jerusalem where David buried Goliath's skull (17:54), greatly strengthening this connection. While the word 'Golgotha' meaning 'border of blood' suggests 'Aceldama', the "field of blood". Goliath coming out to make his challenge coincided with the daily sacrifices which should have been offered at those times, with their reminder of sin and the need for a thoughtful Israelite must surely have seen in Goliath a personification of sin which the daily sacrifices could

The ultimate wager

If David represents Jesus and Goliath represents sin personified, then his supporting Philistines must be the army of sin, their strength and power on this principle of the devil (cp. Goliath). The Israelites were effectively the servants of sin, although with a theoretical chance of freedom; and similarly with mankind before Christ's death. However, the Philistines was now to be formalized and made permanent: "Choose you a man for you...if he be able to fight against Goliath your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants" (17:8,9). This was exactly what happened if He had failed in His mission, we would have permanently been in bondage to sin, as we were effectively ever since. The same wager is implied in Gen. 3:5, another prophecy of the cross- either the man kills the snake by hitting it on the head or the man's heel. He has to kill it outright, first time. Yet thanks to His victory we are now free from sin- and more importantly we should now be subservient to us; Rom. 6:17,18 may even be referring back to this passage: "Ye were the servants of sin (until death)...being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness". This sheds more light on the fact that just one slip would result in the permanent servitude of man to the sin which he hated. No wonder he appeared so confident on him was he ever jovial, light hearted, off hand? Surely the growing flippancy and laid back, humorous attitude

spirit of Christ? " Wherefore...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let that is set before us, looking unto Jesus; who for the joy that was set before him (not now!) endured the cross faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood (in your) striving against sin" (Heb.12:1-4). There is Christ's personal struggle against sin in Gethsemane, prefigured by the pressure on David as he ran towards C

Despised and rejected

Plenty of other details now appear relevant to the Lord's crucifixion. Both his family and the men of Israel gathered to save Israel (1 Sam.17:28-30). Eliab's " Why camest thou down hither?" matches Christ's brothers telling him of the crucifixion psalms emphasize how Jesus felt rejected by both Israel and His family as he fought his Goliath the experience of his Lord, it would seem that David was really hurt and cut by the discouragement he received. In comparison with the Jews who despised our Lord's claims at the time of his death. The alternative rendering of Israel being God's son (Ex.4:22). It is twice stressed that David's brothers " followed Saul" (1 Sam.17:13,14); Christ's brothers were strong Judaists? His family appear to have later disowned him during Saul's persecution. The Lord's friends also did (Ps. 31:11 = Mt. 26:56). David's being sent by his father to see his brethren has echoes highly typical of the Lord Jesus. Joseph's problems with his brothers may well indicate a great barrier between them (surely would have always resented the fact he was the firstborn in the eyes of their mother, whilst they were illegitimate).

David's other brothers also have names which have connections with an apostate Israel. Abinadab means " TI have I stretched forth mine hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Rom.10:21). Shammah means " " make thy land desolate (shammah)" (Jer.4:7), and Israel were to be an astonishment to the world after their rejection of the Jewish system, as the one who appeared superficially to Israel to be the one who could overcome all enemies. Doubtless one of the reasons they were attracted to Saul was because his large warrior physique made him seem like these man to man duels that often decided whole battles in those days. And the men of Israel should have learned that the Law which appeared so powerful to save was unable to do so. By contrast we are specifically told that David (1 Sam.16:7 implies), but was chosen because of the spiritual state of his heart. We have seen how Goliath was a type of Satan can describe both the Jewish system and also sin, because " the strength of sin is the (Jewish) law" (Rom.7:5). Goliath would inevitably have been noticed; as if to imply that Saul (representing the Law) was as superficial as the Law. There is to be a verbal connection at least between the Jews' mocking question of Christ " Where is thy father?" (Jn.8:19) and Saul's question (17:25)- or was Saul's question also a subtle accusation of illegitimacy? Ps.106:13 also seems to describe Israel's sin: " They sang his praise (cp. Saul prophesying). They soon forgot his works; they despised his counsel" (1 Sam.13:8. Note how Saul lost the animals (asses) he was given to look after; while David preserved his father's flock. The Jewish system's inability to save its people compared to Christ's keeping of us.

Of sheep and shepherds

We can now attempt a more chronological analysis of the confrontation between David and Goliath: " And David left the sheep with a keeper, and went, as Jesse commanded him" (17:20). There being no human reason for David's going to the battle may be the implication that Jesse knew more about David's mission than appears on the surface. Thus David's going to the battle " Is there not a cause" (17:29)- i.e. 'I'm not just here to bring provisions- but for something far more important. David represented God, in which case the commandment to go and see the brethren would correspond to Joseph being sent to see his brethren (Gen.37:13) resulting in his figurative death and resurrection in the pit, and the Son being sent by the Father with the subsequent murder of him by the husbandmen (Lk.20:14). " As the Father gave me commandment, e

context of Christ's going to fight sin on the cross connects very nicely with David receiving the father's command

David leaving the sheep and going to fight Goliath recalls the parable of Christ as the good shepherd leaving the sheep (Lk.15:4-6). The shepherd goes alone at night up into the hills (cp. Isaac going to be sacrificed in the hills), and Christ carried the cross of our sins on his shoulder to redeem the lost sheep of mankind (Is.53:6). This lost sheep parable (Lk.15:2-7) is quoted in 1 Peter 2:25: "For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls" (quoting Is.53:5,6: "All we like sheep have gone astray...but he was wounded (on the cross) for our transgressions, saving of the lost sheep. This interpretation of the lost sheep parable- i.e. that the shepherd going to save the sheep on the cross- was first prompted by David leaving the sheep with the keeper to go and fight Goliath, representing Christ's leaving of the sheep with the keeper perhaps looks forward to Christ's entrusting the disciples to the Father's care. Christ parted him from them, as David's encounter with Goliath did. David's subsequent leaving of them altogether looks forward to our Lord's ascension to Heaven after his victory over the real Goliath.

Note how in the fight with Goliath, David progressively shed all human distractions; he left the sheep with a keeper, "left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage" (17:22), and finally left Saul's armour behind, representing overcoming sin. And there must also have been progressive stages in our Lord's coming towards that state of freedom. Notice too how David "ran into the army" after leaving behind "his carriage", and also ran towards the Philistines, despite knowing the supreme difficulty and seriousness of failure, sets us a matchless example of the entire Christian's fight against sin.

Revvig up the faith

"He came to the trench as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle" (17:20). What a tremendous feat; and similarly the strength of sin and man's inability to overcome must have struck fear into our Lord's heart as a newcomer and onlooker would especially have noticed the obvious weakness of Israel. His seeing the weakness must have made him feel like his Lord did on contemplating the fact that he personally would have to overcome sin. He wondered (2) that there was no intercessor: therefore his own arm brought salvation...for he put on righteousness and salvation...the garments of vengeance" (Is.59:16,17- cp. David's shunning of such physical armour for its spiritual allusion to David and Goliath here?).

David asked about the promised reward for killing Goliath as if it was a genuine motivation for him to rev up and fight. "If I killeth him, the King will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house as the house of the King." The victorious Lord received these rewards in the form of the spiritual riches of greater understanding of the Father, a daughter, in marriage, and us being made free from the legal requirements of the Law. This again suggests that the Law represented the demands of the Mosaic law, from which the victory of the cross made us free. Amazingly, it was this which inspired him to take a deep breath of faith and step forward.

Angelic help

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (17:26). At least that was how he overcame Goliath with the help of the Angelic armies: "This...Philistine shall be as (the lion and bear I killed) hath defied the armies of the living God ('God of the living ones'?- i.e. the Angel cherubim, 17:36). This is in the name of the Lord of Hosts (invariably an Angelic title of God), the God of the (Angelic) armies of Israel. It is complete that this triple emphasis on David's Angelic help must have relevance to Christ's overcoming of sin. It is through the Angels that Christ and us in our crosses receive power to overcome sin (cp. Goliath), over and over again.

muster. One can therefore better understand the spiritual panic of our Lord when he felt this Angelic presence of God (Angel), Why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mt.27:46).

Total faith

" And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (17:32). This is a clear allusion- this time to " Let not your heart be troubled" (Jn.14:1), spoken by Jesus as he was about to go for Goliath. His subsequent references to his earlier delivering of sheep out of the mouth of the lion and bear indicate that he was as those lambs had been; again, as if the good shepherd David/ Jesus had left the sheep safely (17:20) and gone to the sheep of Israel, both natural and spiritual. And on another level our Lord's previous triumphs of faith, not least his previous trials, have given him courage for the ultimate spiritual test of the cross.

Such was his totality of faith that David could calmly call out " I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and cast it off Goliath's head (cp.v.54) and the stone hitting the forehead perhaps indicates that the significance of Christ's victory have the possibility of sharing his victory over the mind of the flesh, which is where the real David and Goliath meet every day. David continued: " That all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" , which seems to be referred to as "know" that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself through Christ's loving obedience to the Father.

Brief battle

David crossed the brook and then cast the stone at Goliath (17:49). This connects with our Lord crossing the Jordan being a stone's cast distant from the disciples (Lk.22:41). There is a continued emphasis on David's zeal to fight. " David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and" disarmed him (17:51). There is a possibility that this is consciously read that Christ on the cross " disarmed (NIV) principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them" represented the Law and the sin engendered by it which our Lord conquered on the cross.

Triumph over every sin

" And the men of Israel and Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines" (17:52). That shout of glory considering Christ's victory- and because the devil has been destroyed by his death, we should enthusiastically follow our source, confident we will have the victory- as the Philistines were chased back to their home towns, such as Sorek at the promise that Abraham's seed, both Christ and us, would inherit the gate of our enemies. Note that the enemies we conquer are our sins (Gen.22:18 cp. Lk.1:73-75; Acts 3:25-27; Mic.7:19). David seemed to have anticipated that the Israelites attacking the individual Philistines: " The Lord...will give you into our hands" (17:47). And no one would see that the travail of his soul had produced the same effect in us. The " reproach" was taken away from us as Christ carried away the reproach of our sins on the cross (Ps.69:9; Rom.15:3); therefore we can stand unreproached for no sin at all against us- due to Christ's victory (Col.1:22).

As a final inspiration- David took five stones but used only one. Was he faithless and doubting that the first stone would represent the five books of Moses which Ps.119 tells us was Christ's study all the day, it being through the word of the Lord? Or did he aim to use the other four on Goliath's four giant sons (2 Sam. 21:16-22)? That shows supreme spiritual victory, killed later by David's closest followers- and they must have their counterparts amongst us. So let us too arise and appear so triumphant.

Additional homework for the enthusiast would be a study of Psalms 8 and 144, both of which appear to be about

are therefore a description of our Lord's feelings after his resurrection. Ps.144:3 is amazing: " What is...the so of him?" , showing our Lord's humility is such that even now He is amazed that God bothered to help him, so

Political aspects

The political aspects of this passage have not been considered; the following points are to stimulate thought and different metals which feature in the description of Goliath all find their place in the beasts of Daniel 7, which This implies that the nations of the world are confederate under one charismatic, seemingly invincible leader; stone, Goliath keeled over " upon his face to the earth" (1 Sam.17:49), just as Dagon his god had done earlier the lives of people of this world *consist* in the idols of materialism they possess. Perhaps this " man of sin" w mentioned the evident similarity between Daniel's image and the Goliath man of sin. The place of the conflict between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean. This sounds suspiciously like the king of the north planting his ter (Dead and Mediterranean) in the glorious holy mountain" (Dan.11:45). The Philistines making their constant may well have links with the P.L.O. activities today. Goliath was from Gath (1 Sam.17:4), meaning " winepr hints. Similarly the conflict lasted for 40 days (1 Sam.17:16)- another link with the coming Divine judgement uncircumcised Philistine?" matches " Who art thou, O great mountain?" which was to be destroyed " not by r Goliath was killed by David without a sword in his hand, i.e. not by human might. Note that the Philistines w with the description of Babylon as " O great mountain" . Thus the king of the North, the man of sin, Babylon, subtly alluded to, implying that Christ will destroy all of them during one conflict. It is worth questioning wh opposition to Christ will be separate at the time of His return; present developments suggest there may be one incorporates all these others. But now the possibilities are opened up to the reader to work through 1 Sam.17 prophecy perspective.

Matchless Jonathan

It must be significant that straight after the fight between David and Goliath, representing Christ's conquest o was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul...then Jonathan and David made a c new covenant was made between Jesus and us, making Jonathan representative of us. The extraordinary bond becomes a type of our relationship with Jesus after his victory on the cross. To confirm the covenant, " Jonatl upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" , point human strength and giving it to our Lord when we appreciate the greatness of his victory without those things

Jonathan lived in an environment which was bitterly opposed to David; yet he stuck up for him, at the risk of certain damage to his own prospects (1 Sam.20:31); as we should in this wicked world. As Saul cast a javelin Sam.20:33); as we should fellowship the sufferings of David's greater son. Saul's hate of David resulted in Jo his father had done him shame" (1 Sam.20:34). Is this not our response to our world in its' ceaseless blasphem

Only occasionally could Jonathan and David meet, brief moments of intense fellowship away from the rest o hand in the Lord (1 Sam.23:16), re-confirming their covenant together (1 Sam.18:3; 20:8,16; 23:18). No won kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded" (1 Sam.20:41). Not surprisingly, they l David's Kingdom: " Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (1 Sam.23:17). Our commu wilderness journey must surely mirror those meetings.

The depth of the David/Jonathan relationship introduces to the pages of Scripture the idea of 'agape' love- a l " The beauty of Israel is (singular- re.Jonathan,v.25) slain upon thy high places...I am distressed for thee, my

been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Sam.1:19,26). Such love should does it?

Our Inspiration

The David and Goliath conflict was not only inspirational to Jonathan, but to the men of Israel generally. It so after the fight with Goliath, there was another skirmish with the Philistines at Pas-Dammim [RVmg. 'Ephes-I fought Goliath]. Again, the men of Israel fled, but those who held fast were given a "great deliverance" ["salv as achieving. Those men who stayed and fought were doubtless inspired by David; just as we should be, time Lord on Golgotha.

Notes

(1) See '[The Real Devil](#)'.

(2) Remember the Lord's great respect for John the Baptist.

Saul vs. David (1 Samuel)

Saul's jealousy was on account of David's victories, especially over Goliath, which represented Christ's conquest of sin (2) (18:7,8; 19:8,9), and his subsequent popularity with the people. Saul watched David's spirituality, observing the close fellowship David had with God (18:15,28)

Saul drove David away from his presence and that of Yahweh, to become a fugitive and vagabond; Saul would not accept any sacrifice from David (1 Sam. 26:19). This has so many connections with the driving out of Cain in Gen. 4:14. In other words, Saul was saying that David was not spiritually fit to be in the land and must therefore be destroyed.

19:20,21

The Jews / Judas vs. Christ

The Jews were jealous of the ev moral perfection of the Lord Jes his popularity with the people w seemed to effortlessly achieve. J brothers had a similar motivatio David as a type of Christ comes clearly here.

The Jews maintained that Christ sinner and therefore merited the persecution.

Jn. 7:46

19:10	Christ slipping away from Jews killing him, Jn. 8:59; 7:19
20:1	" Ye seek to kill me...which of you convinceth me of sin?" (Jn. 8:37)
" I have sinned" (19:5)	The very words of Judas (Mt.27:4) Again, we see clearly David as a Christ
19:5 Saul wanted to slay innocent blood	Mt.27:4
20:2	Jn.7:20
22:23	David's men = the uncertain disciples Jn.14:1; 15:4, 20
David couldn't live in the Jerusalem area, near the temple, as he wished, because of the persecution (Ps. 84:3,10)	Christ didn't stay in Judea because Jews sought to kill him (Jn.7:1)
God did not deliver David into Saul's hand (23:14)	Jn. 10:39
Saul: " Where is he?" at the feast (20:27)	Jn. 7:11
David cried out in appeal to Saul	Jn. 7:28
Saul's seeking to kill David ran into problems because of David's popularity with the people	Jn. 7:30,31; 10:39-41- David as Christ
Saul also persecuted the people of Israel at the time, resulting in some of them going forth to be with David (22:2)	David's men represent the followers of the Lord Jesus (cp. Heb. 13:13). The motley crew were bitter men, " their feet are set on fire...whose teeth are set on edge, and arrows, and their tongue a sword"

sword" (Ps. 57:4). So rough were the conditions that David says that having to live with them almost destroyed him spiritually (1 Sam. 26:19). This typology would explain why the body of Christ was full of bitter men and women with harsh words- who eventually will be transformed in Messiah's Kingdom, after the death of David's men.

Saul's spies aimed to *deliver* David into Saul's hands (23:20) Lk. 20:20

It can be taken as read that Saul expected the Israelites to inform him of where David was; he was to be seen as public enemy no.1 Jn. 11:57

Saul had a network of spies watching David (18:20,24; 19:11,19; 23:7,13,25; 24:1; 27:4) Mk. 3:2; Lk. 6:7; 14:1; 20:20

Saul "sought" David, implying a great level of mental effort (19:10; 23:14,15,25; 24:2; 25:26,29; 26:2,20; 27:1,4; 2 Sam. 4:8) The Jews sought to kill Christ (Mt. 21:46; Mk. 11:18; 12:12; 14:1,15; 19:47; 20:19; 22:2,6; Jn.5:16,18; 7:1,11,25,30; 8:37,40; 10:39; 11:8; 18:4,7,8)

David bore a charmed life from Saul's persecution; humanly, he should surely have perished (23:26,27; 27:1) Jn. 7:30

To the Hebrew thinker, there is an unmistakable similarity between the Hebrew words Shaul and Sheol (graves) in the same way as Judas personified the Jewish system and the flesh behind it (hence they are both called the devil), Saul was the great enemy, the satan, of David, as the Jews and the flesh were the great satan for Christ. In this we see I

17:45,46 Note how the Angelic 'hosts' of God are contrasted with the 'hosts' of the enemies of God's people (2 Sam. 5:24; 1 Sam. 17:45,46; Is. 37:36). David and Goliath is the great example- David came to the *hosts* of the Philistines in the name of the God of Angelic *hosts*. And hence his faithful confidence that "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Sam. 17:47). This is a comfort not only in times of physical danger but in realizing that in any situation, there are far more with us than with our opponents. In every 'battle', we of course should be 'on the Lord's side'- and the battle is His, and ultimate victory assured. Perhaps these things are the reference of the enigmatic Song 6:13, which speaks of the dance or company of the two hosts- those of Angels and the corresponding hosts on earth?

17:58: "Saul said to (David, after killing Goliath), Whose son art thou?" . This cannot mean that Saul didn't know David, or who his father was; for in 16:19, before the Goliath incident, " Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son" to ease Saul's depressions. So the question of 17:58 perhaps implied something like: 'Whose son are you? Jesse's? No, from now on you're adopted into my family, you're *my* son now, after all, you've been like a brother to Jonathan all down the years'. The fact that David replied that he was *Jesse's* son may have been a polite refusal to accept this position. It may be that Saul had tried to adopt David earlier, when after David had been at the court for some time, Saul asked Jesse if David could " stand before me" (16:22). Another way of understanding Saul's apparent lack of knowledge of David, after having had much intimate association with him at the court in the past, is to conclude that Saul *pretended* not to know David. In chapter 16, David has left his shepherding and is at the court, as Saul's personal counsellor and armourbearer. In chapter 17, he is back keeping the sheep. It may be that he ran away from the court after Saul tried to adopt him. In other words, he found that despite the close spiritual relationship he enjoyed with the family, Saul was overpoweringly possessive, and he just had to leave. Accordingly, Saul disowned him, hence his very public appearance of ignorance concerning who David was (17:55,56). When David later " avoided out of (Saul's) presence" (18:11), this would not have been the first time he had gone through this. His desire and need to do this was made all the more complex by his falling in love with Saul's daughter, Michal (18:26,28). We can well imagine how we would have loved to be Jonathan's brother-in-law. David and Michal were a marriage made in Heaven- that went wrong.

18:1-see on 1 Sam. 23:16,18

18:1,2 Saul loved David. David had spiritually helped him (16:23), and the very special relationship between the spiritual helper and the helped had fully developed. Yet in such cases it isn't uncommon for there to arise a bitterness between the convert and the converter; exactly as happened with David and Saul. In response to his victory over Goliath, " Jonathan loved him as his own soul. *And Saul* took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house" (18:1,2). This seems to show Saul's response to David as parallel with Jonathan's response. Saul's possessiveness towards David was surely an indication of how closely he felt towards him. That he wouldn't allow him to return to his father's house suggests that Saul wanted to have David as his adopted son. His delight that David was in love with Michal was a strange mixture of motivations; genuine joy at having David as his son-in-law, and also glee that perhaps David would die whilst raising that strange dowry. David was " pleased" to be Saul's son in law, as Saul too was " pleased" at the prospect (18:20,26, the same Hebrew word is used); this indicates the complexity of the relationship.

It must be significant that straight after the fight between David and Goliath, representing Christ's conquest of sin on the cross, " the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul...then Jonathan and David made a covenant" (1 Sam.18:1,3). After the cross, a new covenant was made between Jesus and us, making Jonathan representative of us. The extraordinary bond between David and Jonathan then becomes a type of our relationship with Jesus after his victory on the cross. To confirm the covenant, " Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" , pointing forward to our total divesting of human strength and giving it to our Lord when we appreciate the greatness of his victory without those things (cp.1 Sam.17:39). A good example of how the souls of David and Jonathan were spiritually knit together is shown by the identical style of prayer they had (20:12 cp.23:10; the question arises: Who influenced who?). After Christ's victory on the cross, he entered into a covenant with us his church. The intricately related friendship between David and Jonathan thus becomes typical of that between the Lord Jesus and ourselves. The idea of souls being knit together occurs in Col. 2:2,19, concerning how our hearts and souls are knit together with Christ. This alone encourages us to see Jonathan as typical of ourselves.

18:4 His / *the* robe- see on 2 Sam. 1:23.

18:4 Jonathan stripped himself of his " robe...and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (1 Sam. 18:4). The triple phrase " and / even to..." indicates the totality of this stripping. "Bow" and " sword" often occur together as almost an idiom for human strength (Gen. 48:22; Josh. 24:12; 2 Kings 6:22; 1 Chron. 5:18; Hos. 1:7). Not only did he give David the weapons of his human strength (cp.13:22), but he appears to have stripped himself almost physically bare (cp. Mic. 2:8). Stripping like this is almost always associated with shame. The same word occurs in relating how the Philistines stripped Jonathan of his clothes and weapons, as he lay slain on Gilboa (1 Sam. 31:8,9). This all seems to suggest that Jonathan was saying to David: " I deserve to have been killed by Goliath (cp. the devil), so in a sense I will 'die' now by entering into a covenant with you, knitting my life / soul with yours. Rather than the Philistines (cp. our sins) killing, shaming and stripping me, I'll do it to myself". Isn't this exactly our response to the cross in the ongoing 'baptism' we commit ourselves to? And of course we shouldn't miss the connection with Israel stripping themselves, deeply conscious of their sins, and then entering into covenant with God (Ex. 33:6). Yet does the cross of Christ really fill us with that sense of shame, that desire to throw away all our human strength and knit our souls with that of Christ...?

18:5 To achieve this state of mind must have required a lot of conscious thought and self-analysis by David. We get the sense that David pitted his wisdom against Saul's anger and bitter persecution; David's wisdom is mentioned in tandem with Saul's anger against him (1 Sam. 18:5,11,15,30). "David behaved himself wisely (AVmg "prospered") in all his ways; and the Lord was with him" runs like a refrain through 1 Sam. 18:5,14,15,30. These words are referring back to Dt. 29:9: "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do" . David's charmed life and prospering despite all manner of plotting against him was due to his single-minded devotion to the Law; to those very chapters which tired Bible readers are wont to skip over as boring and not motivating. Yet David found something immensely inspiring and practical about the Law. The word made him wiser than his foes (Ps. 119:98).

18:5,6-see on 2 Sam. 1:23.

18:11- see on 1 Sam. 17:58.

18:19 There's a repeated circumstance of a woman promised in marriage to a man being given to another- in the lives of Samson and David (1 Sam. 18:19).

18:20- see on 1 Sam. 18:1,2.

18:20 As Jonathan's close friend, it was inevitable that David got to know his sister, Michal. David and Michal began their relationship on this basis. Jonathan's spiritual side would have had some reflection in his sister. For even Saul their father had a spiritual side, and it is fair to assume that Jonathan's mother was also a spiritual woman. It is easily overlooked that David later married Saul's wives (2 Sam. 12:8)- including the mother of Jonathan and Michal. So now we can reconstruct the complex spiritual and emotional situation. David without doubt experienced a state of 'in-loveness' with Jonathan. His lament of 2 Sam.1 is proof enough of this. The spirituality which was in Jonathan was also seen in Michal his sister. And David loved Saul, too. Again, his lament over him is proof of this- it shows that David's loving respect for him was not just the result of a steely act of the will, forcing himself to patiently respect Saul. There was something in him which he loved. And we can assume that David did not just marry women whom he didn't spiritually love. There was therefore something in Saul's wives which was spiritual. And the whole thing was not just one way. Jonathan loved David, " Michal, Saul's daughter loved David" (18:20), and Saul clearly had love-hate feelings for David; there was something about him which he deeply loved and respected. The intensity of his hatred of David must have been psychologically connected to a deep-seated love. "He loved him greatly" is the comment of 16:21. The seeds of the love between David and the house of Saul would have begun early on. The reason *why* all this information is included is to provide comfort for us in the incredible emotional and spiritual complexities which we find ourselves in. In the flesh, David cannot have known which way to turn, mentally, spiritually, emotionally. Yet in the Spirit he could turn to his Heavenly Father, whose mind can totally fathom our pain, who can know in totality our every situation.

18:22- see on 1 Sam. 20:13.

18:26,28- see on 1 Sam. 17:58.

19:1,2- see on 1 Sam. 20:13.

Jonathan's intensity of relationship with David meant that he was not ashamed to speak up for him: " Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not *the king* sin against his servant...because his works have been to thee-ward very good: for he...slew the Philistine" (19:4,5). Note how he calls Saul " the King" , suggesting a certain detachment from him. The vision of David standing triumphant over Goliath still motivated Jonathan, to the extent that he could stand up in that hostile environment and testify to the love of David, the extent of his selfless victory, and the urgent need for this to be recognized by men. The spirit of our preaching only occasionally matches this example. No wonder the record stresses Jonathan as being typical of ourselves.

David's confident words that God would deliver him from the Philistines were evidently inspired by Samson, the renowned one-man deliverer from Philistine armies. Both Samson and David wrought " great salvation" for Israel (1 Sam. 19:5 cp. Jud. 15:18).

19:5 Further confirmation of Jonathan seeing David as his personal hero, succeeding where he failed, can be found in the following consideration. Jonathan seems to have seen Gideon as his hero

[compare 1 Sam.14:10-20 with Jud.7:3,10,11,14,22. Jonathan's son was called Merib-baal (1 Chron.9:40), meaning 'rebellion against Baal', an epithet for 'Gideon']. Yet in 19:5 he says that "David put his life in his hand", exactly as Gideon did (Jud. 9:17). In other words, Jonathan saw David as the perfect fulfilment of all he spiritually wished to be, he felt that *David* lived up to the example of his hero Gideon, whereas he did not. Is this how dynamically and intensely we relate to our Lord Jesus? For this is what the David and Jonathan relationship points ahead to.

20:1,2- see on 1 Sam. 20:13.

20:8- see on Josh. 2:12

20:8 Jonathan saw David as God manifest. Yet David saw Jonathan likewise. The words which he speaks to him in 20:8 he later repeats to God (Ps. 7:3,4). We should see each other likewise, in Christ.

20:12- see on 1 Sam. 18:1-3.

Jonathan saw David as God manifest; thus "Jonathan said unto *David* , O Lord God of Israel...." (20:12). Our reflection on Christ's great victory should also makes us appreciate the more finely the degree to which "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" . Yet despite Jonathan's deep respect for David, evidently seeing David as his spiritual superior, David speaks of himself as being so *inferior* to Jonathan! Three times in two verses he calls himself "thy servant" (20:7,8). And David felt that he had "found grace" in Jonathan's eyes (20:3). What a relationship was this! David truly feeling Jonathan's servant, whilst Jonathan gasped at David's spiritual stature. And with what precision do we see the Spirit artlessly capturing our position before Christ, the "servant of all" the church. There was something incredibly mutual about their relationship; Jonathan was a real inspiration to David. He strengthened him, as the disciples did Christ. It is difficult to accurately appreciate the sense in which we have a mutuality of friendship with Christ; the sense in which we actually give him something.

20:13 Jonathan certainly seems to have seen Saul in a somewhat too positive light. His statement that God would be with David as He had been with Saul in the past and was still with him (so the Hebrew seems to imply) surely bespeaks a lack of appreciation of the seriousness of Saul's apostasy (20:13). Despite Saul commanding Jonathan by clear pronouncement to kill David (19:1 Hebrew), Jonathan assures David that Saul is not really intending to kill him; the implication is that he felt David's fear of Saul was somewhat exaggerated (20:1,2). David gently pointed out, in the spirit of Christ, that Jonathan did not realize how deceptive Saul was (20:3). Saul gave the impression that he 'delighted' in David (18:22), using the very same word as in 19:2: "Jonathan...*delighted* much in David" . In other words, Saul and our surrounding world can appear to have the same attitude to David / Jesus as ourselves. Those who see the apostasy as good 'fellow-Christians' have fallen headlong into this trap. The massive difference between the world's attitude to Christ and our own should become more and more apparent to us, despite the external similarities between us and them. Jonathan's familiarity with his father led him to overlook the manic danger which he posed for David, although at other times Jonathan seems to have faced up to it squarely. Again, the similarities with ourselves should be clear; our familiarity with sin, our hereditary closeness to it, leads us to question the real danger it has for the Christ-man. Our sense of the seriousness of sin likewise tends to blow hot and cold.

20:14,15,42 seem to hint at some kind of nervousness, even fear, in Jonathan, despite his closeness to David. He seems to have almost feared that David would take revenge punish him in some way, on account of his close relationship with his sinful father. It must have seemed impossible to Jonathan, living at a time of kinship-based revenge, to believe that ultimately David would not react strongly against Saul's hatred of him. And we too, ever conscious of our sinful nature, the problems of our natural ancestry, struggle to reassure ourselves of the love of Christ that passes knowledge, just as Jonathan must have looked deeper and deeper into the malice-less love of his friend David.

The covenant between Jonathan and David was an eternal one (20:15; 23:17), and was reconfirmed during their brief meetings together, during which they earnestly looked ahead to the Kingdom (23:17). And as we are all too painfully aware, our friendship with the Lord Jesus reflects the frustration of the Jonathan / David relationship, the accumulated tension of being unable to express their spiritual communication with each other, the pain of physical distance, Jonathan not knowing David's geographical location, having to live up to appearances and expectations in the David-hating court of his bitter father, struggling for the courage to stand up for his best friend. The sheer human pain of it all is so thoroughly revealed to the sensitive reader of the records. There is a purpose in this: it is to take us further in appreciating the true nature of our relationship with Christ.

20:30 David loved Saul, his daughters and his son Jonathan; and later David was to marry Saul's wives. These wives were given into David's bosom (2 Sam. 12:8); in other words, they were really close in their relationship; so close, 2 Sam. 12:8 implies, that David had no real emotional need to take Bathsheba. Even while Saul was alive there was probably some attraction chemistry going on between David and those women. This may well be reflected in Saul's fury with Jonathan: "Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman...thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to...the confusion of thy mother's nakedness" (1 Sam. 20:30). This hints at least two things: firstly, Saul had a bad relationship with his wife; and secondly, he suspected some kind of unfaithfulness in her, perhaps only on a mental level.

20:30,31 All of us in Christ experience a massive sense of paradox. We live and work in this world, doing the things of this world in our daily occupations, yet in the more important side of our lives we have this high spiritual relationship with the Lord Jesus and the Almighty Sovereign of this universe. This is - or ought to be- part of our hour by hour experience in this life. A little imagination of Jonathan's situation soon shows that our dilemma was exactly matched by his experience. He was the King's son, heavily taken up with the day to day running of the Kingdom, clearly tipped to succeed the King, and possibly take over as regent on Saul's retirement. Saul effectively says as much during his explosion at Jonathan for befriending David (20:30,31). So there was Jonathan, going up the ladder towards Kingship, when he had no real interest in this, and when he had firmly decided that David would be king, not himself, when the Kingdom was established (1 Sam. 23:17). There must be hundreds of Christians-cum-high flying executives worldwide who can identify completely with this scenario. The bitterness underlying Saul's words in 1 Sam. 20:30,31 indicates a certain element of love-hate in Jonathan's relationship with Saul. We can sense this in the record of 1 Sam. 14, when Jonathan overcame the Philistine garrison whilst his father cowered away in nervous faithlessness. How jealous Saul must have been! Jealousy was one of Saul's characteristics, and it is subconsciously a major feature of the world's aggression towards us; for the world *is* passively aggressive (cp. Gen. 3:15), if only we manifest Christ as we should. Saul almost seems to have contrived his command not to eat on pain of death in order to incriminate his son, whom he knew

would not have heard his prohibition. The way in which he says that even if it were Jonathan who had eaten, then he must die (1 Sam. 14:39), seems to suggest that Saul was actually looking for an excuse to kill Jonathan. This love-hate relationship between Jonathan and Saul is exactly typical of ours with the world and our own flesh.

20:31-34 Jonathan lived in an environment which was bitterly opposed to David; yet he stuck up for him, at the risk of embarrassment and opposition, and certain damage to his own prospects (1 Sam.20:31); as we should in this wicked world. As Saul cast a javelin at David, so he did at Jonathan (1 Sam.20:33); as we should fellowship the sufferings of David's greater son. Saul's hate of David resulted in Jonathan being "grieved for David, because his father had done him shame" (1 Sam.20:34). Is this not our response to our world in its' ceaseless blasphemy of Christ?

20:33- see on 1 Sam. 14:45.

20:41 They agree that if Jonathan shoots arrows well beyond David, then David should flee. Obviously they did not intend to meet if this were the case; otherwise there would have been no point in the arrangement about the arrows. David did need to flee, so Jonathan shot the arrows beyond him. Yet somehow Jonathan and David took a chance and crept towards each other. David went towards Jonathan, somehow hoping that he would meet him. And Jonathan went to find David, hoping against hope that he *wouldn't* flee immediately, as they had arranged. This explains the intensity of their meeting together: "they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded" (20:41). "Until David exceeded" defies complete translation and interpretation. It clearly does not mean that David cried until he stopped crying. David "exceeded" in that he went somewhere beyond; Strong defines the Hebrew word as meaning 'to be made larger in the mind'. In a sense David broke down emotionally, and yet on another level he went beyond, into a level of relationship which was beyond normal emotional experience. In like manner he commented that his love for Jonathan was beyond the love of women; the love of David for Jonathan pointed forward to that special emotional and spiritual bond in Christ which passes the human experience of love (Eph. 3:19).

20:42-see on 1 Sam. 23:16,18

22:5 David's whole experience with Saul was of course led and arranged by a loving Father. The sensible thing would have been for David to get out of Saul's way and lay quiet- and this is what he tried to do, by going to Moab. But then God tells him to go back into Judah (1 Sam. 22:5). This was political suicide. It made no human sense to expose himself to Saul again. And then God tells David to go and fight with the Philistines in order to rescue the people of Keilah (1 Sam. 23:2). Yet the men of Keilah weren't allies worth having- even they were prepared to betray David to Saul, and by this action he made the Philistines hate him yet more, so refuge amongst them was no longer possible. Again and again, God led David into situations that were politically suicidal, that only made things worse for him... because He wanted David to trust in Him alone. And so it happens in our lives. Time and again.

23:2- see on 1 Sam. 22:5.

23:10 - see on 1 Sam. 18:1-3.

23:16,17 Only occasionally could Jonathan and David meet, brief moments of intense fellowship away from the rest of the world, strengthening each other's hand in the Lord (1 Sam.23:16), re-confirming their covenant together (1 Sam.18:3; 20:8,16; 23:18). No wonder their goodbyes were so hard: " they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded" (1 Sam.20:41). Not surprisingly, they looked forward to the promised day of David's Kingdom: " Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (1 Sam.23:17). Our communion meetings with the Lord during our wilderness journey must surely mirror those meetings.

23:16,18 The record powerfully presents the picture of David and Jonathan as two men living in totally different worlds, and yet being bound together, despite the tangles of their lives, by the hope of the Kingdom, and the pure intensity of their spiritual bond with each other in the Lord. The love of David for Jonathan is surpassing. The juxtaposition of their lifestyles is shown by passages like 23:18: "David abode in the *wood* , and Jonathan went to his *house* " . " Jonathan Saul's son (note the emphasis again!) arose, and went to David *into* the wood" (23:16). We are invited to imagine Jonathan walking into the wood, stumbling through it, until he found David, concealed in some deep thicket; and then, after brief but intense fellowship, stumbling back through the undergrowth, brushing himself down, and returning to his stately home. The same impression is given by 20:42: "We have sworn both of us...and David arose and departed (to his den): and Jonathan went into the city" . There seems more than an echo here of Abraham and Lot parting company in Gen. 13:8-12. How many of us, coming out of a memorial meeting and returning to the world, have gone through the same emotions. The clandestine nature of the David:Jonathan friendship is surely replicated between us and Christ. The love of David for Jonathan is Christ's love for us. Their souls were " knit" , a Hebrew word also translated " conspire" , hinting at the secretiveness (18:1). What company we are in! Yet as Jonathan became too involved in his surrounding world (so it seems), so we run a similar gauntlet. The question arises: Should Jonathan have run away from his situation, and gone to join David in the wilderness, like others did? Should we? To close down a career, move down the property ladder, change our eating, travelling, holiday habits.... or stay where we are in Saul's court, to some degree living out a lie, hoping Gilboa won't come for us?

23:17- see on 1 Sam. 20:15 and 1 Sam. 20:30,31.

The way Saul returns from pursuing David because of a rumour of invasion is so similar to Rabshakeh's retreat from Jerusalem after rumours of incursions (1 Sam. 23:27).

24:3 To relieve himself. David and his men were temporarily living [AV "remained" is a poor translation] in the cave, and must've watched Saul and his men drawing near. And then, Saul walks away from the men and starts walking right towards them. They withdraw deeper into the cave. He puts his cloak down and goes further into the cave, to relieve himself and maybe have a rest; presumably he wasn't feeling well and just wanted to be alone. It must've been so very weird; there was enough time for David to discuss with his men whether to kill him or not. This was clearly no coincidence; it was all too weird. Likewise the way circumstances repeated in 1 Sam. 26 was so strange. Again David stands over the weak Saul, again his men urge him to murder him, giving the same reasoning as before, and again David resists. And again David calls to Saul and demonstrates his sincerity and integrity. Our lives aren't random chance; circumstances repeat in order to give us the opportunity to learn from mistakes, i.e. to not make the same mistake again; or even when we respond properly, the circumstance can repeat in essence so that we have our right choice

reinforced by repeated experience. Just as a teacher makes students repeat exercises so that they 'get the point'. This gives extra point to David's warning of Saul in 1 Sam. 26:19- that if Saul were doing what he was doing against David just because other men had stirred him up to it, then this was especially culpable. For David twice had been stirred up by *his* men to slay Saul, and had not done so.

24:4 There is no such oracle recorded; this doesn't mean it wasn't said e.g. by Gad or some other prophet. In this case, we might focus upon the phrase "That you may do to him as it shall seem good unto you". There are times when there is no moral right or wrong in a situation; but what matters is the motive behind the decision we reach. God Himself slew Saul, so perhaps it wouldn't have been a sin for David to have killed him; for David had never been told specifically that he was not to kill Saul just because Samuel had anointed him. But this was the position David came to in his conscience, and he therefore had to uphold it. We so often hanker after a right/wrong, black or white, this is a sin or it isn't. But often the choices are left to us to exercise our conscience, so that the choice is made by us, from the heart, rather than as a matter of legalistic obedience. David had to do what 'seemed good unto him'. In 2 Sam. 18:4 there's a sad contrast with David's resoluteness here – for he uses the same Hebrew words in saying that "whatever seems good unto *you* I will do" at the time of Absalom's rebellion. We are called to do what seems good unto *us* rather than what seems good to those around us.

Another reading would be that God hadn't said this at all (24:6 Heb. could be read as a denial that God had said this), but David's men urged him to see providence at work, as if to say 'This is the day that God is saying to you, that you can now kill Saul'. Trying to work out what providence is telling us is quite a challenge. Even those within the ecclesia can urge us against our conscience, and David is presented as standing alone in his decision making. This is very hard when we're surrounded by those who have stood with us in hard times, our friends and faithful supporters. We risk alienating them by our insistence upon following our conscience and the principle of respecting the value and meaning of persons, even if they are our abusers and enemies.

24:4 Skirt- the hem of blue which was to remind the Israelite of their dedication to Yahweh's holiness. Num. 15:38,39 decreed that this was to be done so that they remembered to keep all the commandments of Yahweh; but Saul is noted for *not* having done this (1 Sam. 15:22-28). David forgave Saul but didn't naively blind his eyes to Saul's unspirituality; and he didn't trust Saul again. Forgiveness isn't the same as reconciliation.

24:5 Heart smote him- but David hadn't done anything wrong. Conscience isn't ultimately reliable (1 Cor. 4:4); we will be judged in the light of God's word, and not whether we have felt OK or not about our actions in life. His sensitive conscience appears again in 2 Sam. 24:10, where again his heart smote him for doing something which wasn't wrong in itself, i.e. to number Israel. His conscience was aware, perhaps, that we can do things which aren't wrong in themselves but which were performed with a wrong attitude. And this is no bad example for us to take. The only other time we read of David's heart smiting him is in Ps. 102:4, where he speaks of himself as a lonely bird in the wilderness, chased by his enemies, but with a heart so smitten that he feels like dying: "My heart is smitten, and withered like

grass; so that I forget to eat my bread” (Ps. 102:4). It would appear that David’s heart didn’t just smite him for that moment; but it was an ongoing feeling he had during that period of his wilderness life. The lesson here is that we shouldn’t just let our conscience smite us, do something about it at the time, and then forget all about the issue. Believing and feeling God’s forgiveness may take a period of time; and the receipt of that forgiveness shouldn’t necessarily take away our sense of failure, just as it doesn’t within human relationships.

24:6 We are all anointed in that we are in Christ, the anointed (2 Cor. 1:21). The same radical respect which David showed, we should show to each other. David’s attitude seems to have influenced Saul’s men, for his armour bearer refused to slay Saul (1 Chron. 10:4,5).

24:7 Rebuked- Heb. ‘to tear apart’. David had to really ‘lay into’ his men to stop them killing Saul. By going the way of grace, he ended up falling out with his own friends and supporters. This frequently happens when we seek to live by grace in reality; it can be a very lonely path. It’s clear from Abishai’s attitude in 1 Sam. 26:8 that David failed to convince his men to share his attitude to Saul.

24:15 - see on Ps. 119 (introduction).

25:5 David sent messengers to Nabal meaning well to him, and they were rudely rebuffed, resulting in his anger which only Abigail’s grace and wisdom saved him from (1 Sam. 25). And yet the same situation repeated in its essence when he sent messengers to Hanun who were likewise misinterpreted and rebuffed (2 Sam. 10:3). Again, David got angry- but there was no Abigail to restrain him, and he did get into an impossible fight... from which by grace God delivered him. Could it not be that David failed to learn from his previous experience...?

25:31 The way Abigail asked David to remember her for good when he came in his kingdom, knowing that he was perfect and suffering unjustly...is exactly the spirit of the thief on the cross. And David like Jesus responds that he has “accepted thy person”.

27:1- see on Ps. 119 (introduction).

Note the similarities between the David / Nabal / Abigail experience and those of Jacob, whilst he too kept flocks (1 Sam. 25:35 = Gen. 32:20; 25:18 = Gen. 32:13; 25:27 = Gen. 33:11).

Chapter 31 Here Saul and Jonathan are described in terms representative of apostate Israel; see Am. 2:14,15; Micah 1 and 2 and expositions there.

It is really stressed that Saul and Jonathan “fell” on Gilboa (1 Sam. 31:1,8; 2 Sam. 1:10,12,19,25,27), using a Hebrew word which is often used about spiritual falling. The fact that “the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons” (1 Sam. 31:2) gives the impression of them fleeing from the Philistine soldiers. This sends the mind back to the Law’s warning that an apostate Israel would flee before their enemies (Dt. 28:25).

31:6 There were times when Jonathan’s relationship with Saul and the court became more strained than at others. Their all consuming desire was increasingly the destruction of David. Our surrounding world has a similar, obsessive, anti-Christ enthusiasm to which we are diametrically opposed. It

would seem that Saul's whole family turned against David. A comparison of 1 Chron. 10:6 and 1 Sam. 31:6 shows a parallel between the house of Saul and his men; and it was the men of Saul who aided Saul in persecuting David (23:25,26). Further divergence between David and Saul's family is shown by the fact that Michal, Saul's daughter, either left David or was divorced by him (2 Sam. 2:2 cp. 6:20).

Jonathan and Saul's " bow...and sword" were used by them in the fateful battle on Gilboa (2 Sam. 1:22). Does this mean that Jonathan was trusting in his human strength again? Psalm 44, which sounds very much like David's meditation on Israel's defeat on Gilboa, includes the comment: "I (David) will not trust in my *bow*, neither shall my *sword* save me" (Ps. 44:6). Or does it mean that although Jonathan gave David / Jesus his human strength, David gave it back to him, for him to use on his own initiative?

1:22 It is possible to Biblically reconstruct the battle of Gilboa, and thus to enter into the pathos of the whole scene yet more fully. Saul and Jonathan did not retreat (2 Sam. 1:22) when the rest of Israel did (1 Sam. 31:1). Saul and his sons held their ground, slaying many Philistines. But then Jonathan was wounded by an arrow (the Hebrew word translated " slain" in 2 Sam. 1:19,22,25 means to pierce to death; crucifixion language), as was Saul. Yet they kept on fighting, until they were surrounded on all sides; they died " in the *midst* of the battle" (2 Sam. 1:25); they " perished" (2 Sam. 1:27), a Hebrew word also translated 'to have no way to flee'. They tried to flee, eventually throwing down their shields so that they could run faster (2 Sam. 1:21). Eventually Jonathan and his brothers, the cream of Israel, lay slain on Gilboa, and Saul then fell on his sword.

1:23 David's lament over Saul and Jonathan is extremely positive, after the spirit of the way in which Christ looks upon his dead saints (cp. God's positive comments on many of the kings after their death). Yet we know that Saul's death was in recompense for his dire apostasy. In that punishment, David observed, he and Jonathan " were not divided" (2 Sam. 1:23). This may suggest that in some sense Jonathan was too closely linked with his father, and was therefore implicated in his punishment. It can be shown that not all Saul's sons died on Gilboa; therefore there was special point to the fact that Jonathan died with his father in that way. David's command that there should be no dew or rain upon the mountains (2 Sam. 1:21) was to be picked up years later by Elijah, when he made the same imprecation against an apostate Israel (1 Kings 17:1).

1:23 The record reveals a certain closeness between Saul and Jonathan in Jonathan's relationship with Saul. David recognized this when he reflected that even in their death they were not divided (2 Sam. 1:23). Perhaps this means that they died fighting next to each other. Consider the following:

- The description of Jonathan as the son of Saul occurs a massive 23 times; the connection between them is certainly highlighted.
- We have mentioned that Jonathan had Gideon as his personal hero. Yet there is ample evidence that Saul too saw Gideon in this light. Does this suggest that

in his more spiritual days, Saul successfully imparted his spiritual enthusiasm for Gideon to his son in Sunday school lessons?

- Mephibosheth is called Saul's son (2 Sam. 9:7,10; 19:24), although he was actually Jonathan's son. This suggests that the son was brought up in Saul's house. This certainly does not give the impression that Jonathan separated himself from his father's house.

- Jonathan was commander of the army (13:2). When he gave "*the* robe that was upon him" to David (18:4), he was effectively making David the commander (cp. 2 Chron.18:9,29). Thus when "Saul set (David) over the men of war" (18:5), he was tacitly going along with Jonathan's wish, even though by this time he had already heard the women praising David more than himself, and his bitter jealousy against David had already begun (18:6). This little point simply shows the external unity of action between Saul and Jonathan.

This closeness in Jonathan's relationship with Saul shows the emotional tangle which Jonathan was in on account of his relationship with David. If we truly love Christ, and if we are honest enough to come to terms with the pull of our own natures, we will be going through exactly the same. Our Lord seems to have seen in Jonathan a type of ourselves. In the context of warning us that loyalty to him would mean confessing him before men and conflict between fathers and sons, he encourages us that not a hair of our head will perish (Mt.10:30 cp. Lk.21:18). This is picking up the application of this phrase to Jonathan in 14:45.

1:26 "The love of Christ, that passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19) is clearly prefigured in David's feelings for Jonathan and the love of David for Jonathan. Despite many passionate relationships with women, experiencing the depth of human closeness more than many, David could sob: "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Sam. 1:26). The Hebrew for "wonderful" has a root meaning 'separate'. This love of Jonathan was separate from all other love David had known. In this we see perhaps the first Old Testament foretaste of *agape* love, love beyond the *phileo* and *eros*. Emotionally and spiritually, Jonathan and David went way ahead of their time. David speaks of Jonathan's love in terms of male:female love. He describes him as "the beauty of Israel", "very pleasant hast thou been unto me"; and grammatically, "thy love to me..." (2 Sam. 1:26) implies that the lover was female. These two brethren had a spiritual love for each other which totally transcended the gender division. In like manner, our Lord said that male believers could be his sister and mother. We are dealing with high things here. Yet the heights of the David:Jonathan relationship are set down here to challenge us to at least try to touch the sky, however briefly. And when David later wrote of how good and "pleasant" it is for brethren to dwell together in unity (Ps. 133), he surely had the pleasantness of his relationship with Jonathan in mind, and wished it to be shared by all his brethren.

1:27 "The mighty"- see on 1 Sam. 14:45.

2:2 - see on 1 Sam. 31:6.

Compare Gen. 48:16 with 2 Sam. 4:9. What Jacob only learnt at the *end* of his life, David learnt and applied during his life. And we should likewise not be experiential learners, but learn instead from Jacob.

5:17-24- see on 1 Sam. 14:7

6:20- see on 1 Sam. 31:6.

7: 6 "I have . . . walked in a tent and in a tabernacle"- the Angel "walked" in the sense that the Israelites physically walked, carrying the tent and tabernacle on their shoulders, with the associated Angelic presence in them. It was an Angel who actually made the promises to David.

" I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant" (Gen. 32:10) was spoken by Jacob on that night of destiny, in recognition of how he was morally unworthy to receive the promises which God had given him (see context). David picked this up in 2 Sam. 7:18, where he comments on his unworthiness to receive the promises to him, which were an extension of those Jacob received.

7:27 David speaks of being bold in his prayer of praise for the promises made to him (2 Sam. 7:27 RVmg.). Yet Heb. 4:16 encourages *us* to be bold in prayer. He was our pattern in prayer.

9:3- see on Ps. 35:14.

9:7,10-see on 2 Sam. 1:23; Ps. 35:14.

10:3- see on 1 Sam. 25:5

That David's sin is indeed an epitome of all our sins is proved by the way in which the record of it is framed in the language of the fall. The connections between the falls of Adam and David have been commented upon in Andrew Perry, *The Doctrine Of Salvation*, Vol.1 p.197. The following is a summary of the links:

Adam (Gen. 2 and 3)	David (2 Samuel)
2:8	12:5
2:17	12:5
2:17	12:9
6:2	12:9
3:17	12:10
3:7	12:11
3:8	12:12

3:8	11:24
3:21	12:13
3:17	16:11
3:19	16:13

12:1 Reflection on the record enables us to enter a little into the nature and tragedy of David's sorrow; remembering always that David is our example. His love for Abigail, with marriage to her so wondrously arranged, would have been cruelly mocked by his falling for Bathsheba. His abuse of Uriah's loyalty (when almost certainly Uriah knew exactly what David was playing at) would have created a sadness that can only be described as ineffable. David in his early years described himself as a "poor man", indicating his humility; yet the very same word is used by Nathan in the parable about Uriah, as if to bring home to David that he had slain a man who had the humble loyalty which he had had in those early, spiritually formative years (1 Sam. 18:23 cp. 2 Sam.12:1,3,4).

12:7 it is difficult to read Rom. 2:1 without seeing an allusion to David's condemnation of the man who killed his neighbour's only sheep: "Thou art inexcusable, O man, *whosoever thou art* that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself". Surely Paul so saying that David's massive self-deception and hypocrisy over Bathsheba can all too easily be replicated in our experience.

12:8 Master's wives- see on 1 Sam. 18:20; 20:30.

12:13- see on Mic. 7:9

15:8 Jacob had vowed: "If God will be with me...then shall Yahweh be my God: and this stone...shall be God's house" (Gen. 28:20-22- words quoted by faithless Absalom in 2 Sam. 15:8). The implication was that Jacob didn't consider Yahweh to be his God at that time. And yet God had promised Abraham that he would be the God of his seed (Gen. 17:7,8); Jacob was aware of these promises, and yet he is showing that he did not accept their personal relevance to him at this time. And Absalom quoted them about himself.

19:6 Joab's comment about the way David loved his enemies (2 Sam. 19:6) was verbatim picked up by the Lord and set up as the example for each of us.

19:20 In the same way as God did not impute iniquity to David (Ps. 32:2), so David did not 'impute iniquity' to Shimei for cursing him, and did not carry out a rightful death sentence against that man (2 Sam. 19:19,21). Note how Shimei uses the very same wording which David used in *his* repentance: "I have sinned" (2 Sam. 19:20).

19:24-see on 2 Sam. 1:23.

As Samuel tarried longer than Saul expected, so Amasa "tarried longer than the set time which [David] had appointed him" (2 Sam. 20:5).

20:10- see on Jud. 16:13

The last mention of the David : Jonathan relationship is in 2 Sam. 21:12-14, where we read that David personally ("he" cp. "they") took and carried the bones of Saul and Jonathan to their final resting place. The love of David for Jonathan is apparent. We are invited to imagine David carrying the bones of his best friend, perhaps just the ashes of them (31:12,13), cradling them (or the container) in his arms, weeping as he walked. How about this for pathos. What *is* man, that God is mindful of us? The words of David's lament in 2 Sam.1 would have surely come to his mind. It is almost certain that David memorized them, seeing it was taught as a song of remembrance (2 Sam. 1:18). There would have been the restimulation of so much. So that is how the Spirit concludes the story, David walking off into the sunset with the bones of Jonathan. It should be remembered that this occurred after David's disgrace with Bathsheba. The thought must surely have gone through his mind: It's a good thing dear Jonathan isn't hear to see it. The very name of the prophet Nathan, the exposor of David's sin, would have restimulated David. For 'Jonathan' means 'Yahweh-Nathan'. It is quite likely that in practice David would not have pronounced the 'Yah' prefix; he would have called Jonathan 'Nathan' (how many 'Jonathan's do you know whose name isn't abbreviated by their friends?).

David took five stones to kill Goliath but used only one. Was he faithless and doubting that the first one would hit home? Or did he aim to use the other four on Goliath's four giant sons (2 Sam. 21:16-22)? See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

David's description of how the cherubim acted in his life in 2 Sam. 22 is full of Angelic language:

v. 2 "My rock"- an Angel (Gen. 49:24)

v. 3 "My shield"- the Angel who made the promises to Abraham (Gen. 15:1)

v. 3 "My saviour"- as the Holy Spirit Angel was to Israel (Is. 63:8-10)

v. 7 "He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears"- the language of Angelic limitation regarding the Angel who dwelt in the temple.

v. 9 "fire"- God makes His Angels a flame of fire (Ps. 104:3,4).

v. 10 "came down " - God manifest in the Angels, as at Sodom and Babel.

v. 11 "a cherub. . did fly. . wings of wind". Gabriel could "fly swiftly"; the Angels are made "spirits"- winds.

v. 12 "darkness. . thick clouds"- the Angel dwelt over the darkness of the Most Holy and in the pillar of cloud; cp. the scene during the Angelic manifestation at Sinai.

v. 15 "arrows. . . lightning"- Angel cherubim language

v. 16 "the blast of the breath (spirit) of His nostrils". God's spirit is manifested through Angels.

v. 17 "He sent from above, He took me"- the physical movement of the Angels from Heaven to earth to obey God's word

v. 25 "Before His eyes"- Angels

v. 37 "Thou hast enlarged my steps. . so that my feet did not slip"- the Angel keeping David from sinning?

23:1 "God of Jacob"- an Angel

23:3 "the rock of Israel" (an Angel) inspired David- which is the work of Angels.

Truly David is our example. David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. "The God of my rock is *my* shield... he is a shield to *all* them that trust in him" (2 Sam. 22:3,31). "*I* am in a great strait; let *us* fall now into the hand of the Lord" (2 Sam. 24:14) reflects this. When he sung Psalms, he invited them to come and sing along with him (Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1). And many of these Psalms of praise seem to have their origin in his experience of forgiveness regarding Bathsheba.

"Let people serve thee" was the blessing promised to Jacob in his moment of weakness, as he crouched before his father in fawning deception (Gen. 27:29). And yet David applies this promised blessing to himself (2 Sam. 22:44).

David implies that his inspiration was directly from an Angel: "The God of Jacob. . . the Spirit of the Lord spake by me. . . the God of Israel said. . . the Rock of Israel spake to me" (2 Sam. 23:1-3). These four descriptions of God are all Angelic phrases. The Angel which dwelt over the ark between the cherubim, with their Angelic connections, was firmly linked with "the ark of the testimony" (the word of God). "I (the Angel) will meet with thee. . . from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment" (Ex. 25:22). See on Am. 2:9-11

Perhaps the satan which moved David to number Israel was a Satan-Angel (2 Sam. 24:1), acting directly on David's heart to bring about a trial for both David and Israel? This is one of the many indications that the numbering of the people was not David's sin.

24:14- see on 22:3.

"The Lord repented Him of the evil, and said to the Angel that destroyed the people, It is enough; stay now Thine hand" (2 Sam. 24:16). This "destroying Angel" (1 Chron. 21:15 RV) is surely "the destroyer" who operated in the wilderness. We see here one Angel having the ability to formulate a purpose and another blindly carrying it out until told not to- a scenario which we see repeated elsewhere (e. g. at the Passover and in Ez. 9). It was only David's prayer which led to "the destroyer" ceasing. Notice how the Angel repented and then encouraged David to offer a sacrifice so the Angel would be "intreated for the land" (v. 19,25). Similarly, the Angel repented of punishing Israel and wanted to restore them, and to enable this to happen He encouraged the people through Ezra to be spiritual. Thus Angelic repentance has to be confirmed by human action.

8:35 Solomon inserts parts of his father's Bathsheba psalms in his prayers for how all Israel could be forgiven if they "confess thy name...when thou afflictest them...saying, We have sinned...forgive thy people...and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed" (1 Kings 8:35,47,50 = Ps. 32:5 etc.). On the basis of David's pattern, all God's people can find forgiveness, if they make a like confession. Indeed, this has long been recognized by Jewish commentators; and many of the Psalms understood by them as relevant to the Nazi holocaust are Bathsheba Psalms. "Out of the depths" they cried like David; and at the entrance to Bergen-Belsen it stands written: "My sorrow is continually before me" (Ps. 38:17), in recognition of having received punishment for sin [note how these kind of plaques contain no trace of hatred or calling for Divine retribution upon the persecutors].

17:1 -see on 2 Sam. 1:23.

Obadiah faithfully hid Yahweh's prophets, at the risk of his life (1 Kings 18:13); but when tested again in this matter, he was fearful to appear to Ahab to have been hiding Elijah's location (1 Kings 18:10-12). We can pass the test at one stage in our lives, and yet when the same test repeats later, we may still fail.

18:31- see on Gen. 35:2

Here was a man of genuinely outstanding faith. He heard in the ears of faith the sound of rain, before he even formally prayed for it (1 Kings 18:40-42 cp. James 5:17,18). And yet, reading through the record, there is ample evidence that at the very same time as he showed such faith, he had a hardness and arrogance which was contrary to the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

22:10- see on Ez. 10:5

The visions of 1 Kings 22:19-23, Isaiah 6 and Rev. 4 show God seated on a throne with Angels before Him, bringing information and requests to Him and departing with commands to obey; the idea of a council in Heaven is clearly hinted at in Job 1; Gen. 1:26; Ps. 89:7. God sitting on a throne implies that each request or piece of information presented is 'judged' and an appropriate decision made. The 'case' of the adversaries to God is presented by a 'satan' Angel in Job.

1 Kings 22:19-23 gives another picture of the Heavenly council and way of working described earlier- Micaiah saw "the Lord (God Himself) sitting on His throne and ALL the host of Heaven(the Angels) standing by Him on His right hand and on His left". God told them His desire- for Ahab to die at Ramoth-Gilead. He then asked which Angel wanted to effect this- "Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one (Angel) said on this manner, and another said on that manner". We thus learn that like us, on hearing God's desire the elohim all have different ways of trying to fulfil it. One "Spirit" (Angel) suggested that He would put a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, and this was the suggestion chosen and enabled by God. This shows that the Angels do not all automatically know the best way of bringing about God's purpose, and therefore they need to seek His advice and perhaps discuss things amongst themselves first before acting. The thing we want to especially note in the present context is that "ALL the host of Heaven" were there around the throne of God participating in this decision. And so all the Angels are involved in the decisions God and the Angels make about us. See on Lk. 15:6

1 Kings 22:22 describes the Angels being sent out from the court of Heaven to do God's word. So when we read of God sending lions (2 Kings 17:25,26), sending wild beasts and famine (Lev. 26:22; Ez. 5:17; Dt. 32:24), sending locusts (Joel 2:25), it would seem that Angels are sent forth from God's throne in order to command animals to obey God's word. And moreover, He sends an evil spirit between men (Jud. 9:23) and stubborn hearts are also sent from God (Ps. 81:13). The same Angels who are sent to control the animals can also therefore work to give men certain attitudes of mind.

22:22 - see on Ez. 14:9

In 2 Kings 5:9, Elisha sat in his house and messengers from a powerful man, Naaman the leper, came to him; and displayed an amazing calm before them. This situation repeated in 2 Kings 6:32, where Elisha again sits in his house and the messengers of an aggressive King came to him. The theme of

lepers recurs in this latter context also (2 Kings 7:3). And in 2 Kings 5:18 we read of Naaman as a man upon whose arm a King (of Syria) leaned; and we find one of those sent to Elisha the second time was likewise "a lord upon whose hand the King (of Israel) leaned (2 Kings 7:2).

5:18- see on 5:9

6:32- see on 5:9

7:2- see on 5:9

10:30,31- see on Hos. 1:4

The Angels being physically with us in our lives means that we are always in the presence of God, as they represent Him. The fact that "the Lord spoke to Moses face to face " through an Angel shows that they represent God's face , and they are also likened to the eyes of God. Even when a man is wicked in some ways , he may still have presence of the Angels in his life. Thus although Israel were wicked in the time of Jehoahaz and were therefore punished by Hazael of Syria, because of the covenant with Abraham "neither cast He them from His presence (mg:face) as yet " (2 Kings 13:23). And therefore Jehoahaz is described as doing what was right in the sight (the eyes) of the Lord (i. e. the Angels with him), although he did not take away the high places (2 Kings 14:3-5). It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

So often kings who were not very faithful or spiritual are described with a rubric like: " He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord: he did according to all that his father...had done" (e.g. 2 Kings 15:34). This may not mean that he did what was right in God's sight *full stop*. He did what was right *only insofar as his father had done*. And this is why over time, the spirituality of the kings of Judah decreased.

17:13- see on Jer. 23:18,22

The frequent references to Israel being removed from His sight, or eye (e.g. 2 Kings 17:23) may refer to the way that an Angel was permanently present in Israel, the land in which the Angel eyes of the Lord ran to and fro. By going into captivity, Israel were thus removed from God's Angelic 'eye'. This would explain how Israel were never out of God's sight in the sense of His awareness of them. And yet language of limitation is being used here- because the Angel dwelling in Israel no longer 'saw' the people. This idea may be behind the references to God's eye not sparing nor pitying Israel (Ez. 7:4)- when in fact God Himself did and does spare and pity Israel. The implication would then be that His grace and pity is even greater than that of His Angels- which is an encouraging thought to us here on earth who struggle to believe in the extent of God's personal grace to us.

17:25 see on 1 Kings 22:22

Jacob's name change reflected God's perception that Jacob had changed. And yet at that point in time, it seems Jacob didn't realize his change; for he had to be reminded of the change of name later, he had to be encouraged to accept that it was really true. 2 Kings 17:34 criticizes men for worshipping Yahweh but also their own gods; they are rebuked with the comment that God had

made a covenant with " the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel" . The suggestion is surely that when Jacob became Israel, he quit the life of half-hearted service to God. This was the decision he came to that night when he wrestled with the Angel, and his name was changed.

19:4- see on 19:35

In response to Hezekiah's prayer, an Angel 'went forth' on earth and slew 185,000 Assyrians (2 Kings 19:35). Hezekiah was aware of the court of Heaven responding to his prayer; for he had commented that God would there "reprove the words" of Rabshakeh (2 Kings 19:4). The Hebrew for "reprove" is a legal term, meaning to convict, judge, plead etc. Hezekiah knew that the court of Heaven was considering Rabshakeh's words, and his prayer was a plea for those words to be convicted in Heaven's court, and an answer sent out. And this is what happened. Later, we read of Hezekiah asking that same court to "remember" his good life- again using a word capable of having legal overtones, of considering witness. And God replied by saying that He had "heard" that prayer- the same Hebrew word is translated 'to make a proclamation', as if He had considered Hezekiah's 'plea' and would respond (2 Kings 20:3,5).

20:3,5- see on 19:35

25:7- see on Jud. 16:28

The Septuagint states that Job was the " Jobab" of 1 Chron.1:44,45, who lived five generations after Abraham.

1 Chron. 4:10 gives an example of using previous Angelic promises and preparatory work in order to achieve an act of faith. Some of the children of Judah later requested that their border be enlarged, at the expense of driving out neighbouring Canaanite tribes. "Jabez called on the God of Israel (an Angelic term), saying, Oh that Thou wouldest bless me indeed (a reference back to the Angelic blessing of Abraham's seed with the promise of possession of the land?), and enlarge my coast, and that Thine hand (an Angelic phrase) might be with me, and that Thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested. " In passing, is this the basis of "deliver us from evil... (i e.) lead us not into (spiritual) temptation" in the Lord's prayer? In that case our sins are being likened to the tribes which Jabez drove out in faith, and we should believe that our Angel has driven our sins out for us in prospect, so that we might inherit the promises.

8:33 - see on 1 Sam. 16:8.

When Israel walked with God, "The hosts of the children of Levi" were actually called "the host of the Lord" (1 Chron. 9:18,19 Heb.). If we each have a guardian Angel, it makes sense that the hosts of God's people on earth are represented by Angelic hosts in the Heavens.

10:6- see on 1 Sam. 31:6.

9:40 - see on 1 Sam. 14:10-20.

It seems from 1 Chron. 11:13,14 that soon after the fight with Goliath, there was another skirmish with the Philistines at Pas-Dammim [RVmg. 'Ephes-Dammim'- the same place where David fought Goliath]. Again, the men of Israel fled, but those who held fast were given a "great deliverance"

["salvation", RVmg.], just as David is described as achieving. Those men who stayed and fought were doubtless inspired by David; just as we should be, time and again, by the matchless victory of our Lord on Golgotha. See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

11:22 hosts- see on 14:15

Benaiah killed a lion in order to prepare him for killing two lionlike men (1 Chron. 11:22)

1 Chron. 12:8 describes David's ecclesia in the wilderness as having faces "like the faces of lions" (Angel-cherubim language?), being "a great host, like the host of God"- David's host became increasingly in line with God's Heavenly Hosts of Angels, the four living creatures. We are to reflect the court of Heaven on earth.

David's host increased, until it became "a great host", "like the host of God" (1 Chron. 12:22)- the parallel between David's men and the Angelic hosts is clear. Significantly, the Angelic armies that destroyed the Syrians are called 'a great host' in 2 Kings 7:6. Asa and his army defeated the Ethiopians- and it's described as them being "destroyed before the Lord and before his host" (2 Chron. 14:13). Again, the hosts of Israel become the hosts of God.

1 Chron. 13:6 "David went up. . . to bring thence the ark of God the LORD that dwelleth between the cherubims, whose name is called on it". The unusual phrase 'God the LORD' may imply 'the Angel the Yahweh', as if recognizing that the Angel had God's Name, as we know the Angel which lead Israel was given by God. Thus in this context David goes on to say about the ark of the Lord "whose Name is called on it". When Uzzah died it is stated "there he died before God" (v. 10), as if he died in the presence of an Angel- i. e. the Angel present inside the ark which he touched. See on Ps. 78:60

1 Chron. 14:15 gives an incident similar to the scenario of the conquest, with the Angel physically going ahead of them and the people having to do their part in following. "When thou (David) shalt hear a sound of going (like the noise of the Angel cherubim in Ezekiel 1?) in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then shalt thou go out to battle; for God (the Angels) is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines". So once the Angels had physically moved forward and David had heard them doing this, he too could move ahead in doing the human part in bringing God's purpose about. David alludes to this as a regular experience when he speaks of God 'going out' with the hosts / armies of Israel (Ps. 60:10 RV). His hosts were as the hosts of God (1 Chron. 11:22)- he walked in step with the Angel Cherubim above him, as Ezekiel was to do later. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10; Rev. 21:12.

15:12 David's bringing the ark to the place which he had prepared (1 Chron. 15:12) is the basis of the Lord's words in Jn. 14:1-3. Clearly the Lord saw David as Himself, and us as the ark. The 'bringing up' or 'lifting up' of the ark (1 Chron. 15:12,22 RVmg.) to a perpetual dwelling place has evident reference to the resurrection. And when the ark was finally brought or lifted up to Zion, David / Jesus dealt bread and wine to the people (1 Chron. 16:3). One practical encouragement from this typology is that the memorial feast is a celebration that in fact we, the ark, have in prospect already been brought or lifted up into the eternal place prepared for us in the Kingdom.

16:3- see on 1 Chron. 15:12.

21:15- see on 2 Sam. 24:16

23:13- see on Jn. 17:17

1 Chron. 28:2- see on Ps. 132:8

Maybe the words of David to Solomon in 1 Chron. 28:20 came to Christ's mind in Mt. 27:46: "My God (cp. "My God, My God") will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, *until* thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord". Recognizing He had now been forsaken, Jesus agreed "It is finished". Indeed, from the moment He left the Upper Room the work was finished and therefore the presence of the Angel departed (Jn. 17:4 "I have finished the work. .").

2 Chron. 9:1 *Hard questions*- The Hebrew idea seems to be of trick questions. She came to "prove" him- what we read of in this chapter is the conversion of a sceptic, but she was converted not so much by the ideas, the intellectual gymnastics, but what she saw with her own eyes of the effect of that wisdom. "No more spirit in her" (:4) could imply a giving up in a mental fight against Solomon. She initially didn't believe the words about Solomon (:6).

:2 *Questions*- A poor translation. Literally, her 'words', s.w. "communed" in :1. He told her the words she had in her mind before she said them. This is the way good conversation goes, this is how people are won for Christ- when you tell them things which they were about to say. Paul uses this method when he foresees and answers questions which he foresees, e.g. "Some man will say, How are the dead raised up?" (1 Cor. 15:35).

:3 *Seen the wisdom*- Wisdom and truth are seen in practice, not just heard with the ear. Only as the word becomes flesh in us will our witness of that word be ultimately persuasive to our audience.

:4 *No more spirit* - See on :1. Clearly 'spirit' here means something other than the life force, it refers to something mental and emotional.

:5 *Report*- s.w. 'word', see note on :2. Hearing reports, wisdom in mere words, is not persuasive of itself until it is seen in practice.

:7 *Joy / happiness* is a proof of wisdom in practice. Acts records constant joy amongst those who accepted Christ, and Heb. 3:6 implies that to stop rejoicing in the hope means we have lost the spiritual plot completely. Joy is therefore a necessary hallmark of those who are truly secured in Christ.

:8 *His throne*- Although Israel's desire for a human king was a rejection of God as king, yet God worked through that situation rather than reject them as they had rejected Him. He accepted the human kingdom of Israel as His Kingdom on earth.

To establish them forever- She perceived that God's intention was that Solomon's kingdom should be eternal, that he should be the full fulfilment of the Messianic Kingdom and King promised to David. But Israel later complained of how Solomon abused them, and his happy servants of :7 turned

against his son, complaining of how harshly Solomon abused them. The great potential wasn't achieved, and so God's prophetic word was delayed and fulfilled a different way in Jesus.

:12 *She turned*- s.w. 'to be converted'. She became a proselyte.

:13 The only other reference to 666 is as the number of the beast. The list of things Solomon received and traded in (:14) are exactly repeated about wicked Babylon in Rev. 18. What appeared to be God's Kingdom became the basis for the kingdom of the flesh.

:18 Here Solomon starts to play God, because the idea of having a throne over the 12 tribes of Israel with a footstool is the language of God's throne.

:19 If there were 12 lions on each side of the throne on each of the six steps then we have a total of 144 lions. The 144,000 before *God's* throne was an allusion to how royalty considered 144 a significant number. Solomon was acting as God, assuming his kingdom was the Kingdom of God, that he was the promised Messiah son of David, yet without the spirituality required for that. When have we played God?

:24 *A rate*- This would suggest Solomon began to charge for his wisdom- when it was God's wisdom. Even if it is argued that the gifts were totally voluntary, we recall how Daniel and others despised the gifts of kings offered in return for their having shared God's wisdom with them. Should wisdom ever really be paid for?

:25 All in total disobedience to Dt. 17:16-20. When have we been blind to clear commandments, whilst preaching God's wisdom so well to others?

:26,27 All typical of the future Kingdom of God.

Fire coming down from Heaven (e. g. 2 Chron. 7:1) to consume acceptable sacrifices probably refers to the Angels being made a flame of fire (Ps. 104:4) to consume the sacrifice. In 2 Chron. 7:1 this would be by the Angel dwelling in the temple. The same scenario was probably seen in Eden, when the Angel cherubim consumed the sacrifices.

10:3,4- see on 24:2

Asa's faith was rewarded when he faced a massive Ethiopian army; but some years later, God repeated the situation. A huge Israelite army faced him; and instead of trusting in Yahweh, he gave the temple treasures to Syria so that they would come and fight the battle for him. And God wasn't slow to point out how circumstances had repeated, but this time Asa had failed the test: " Were not the Ethiopians and Lubims a huge host...? Yet because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand... herein you have done foolishly: therefore from henceforth you shall have wars" (2 Chron. 16:8.9). The "wars" God brought upon Asa weren't merely punishments; they were yet

further opportunities for Asa to face the same situations, and overcome them with faith. And God likewise works in our lives.

18:9-see on 2 Sam. 1:23.

It seems there are two groups of Angels- Angels of evil (Ps. 78:49) and of good. Thus God creates both good and evil- and Isaiah 45:5-7 emphasizes that He makes a distinct creation of both- using these separate groups of Angels. However we stress that the Angels of evil are not sinful Angels. This division is perhaps hinted at in 2 Chron. 18:18, where "all the host of Heaven" are seen standing around the throne of God himself "on His right and on His left". The exact way in which these two groups of Angels work is unclear, and this perhaps explains the difficulty all Bible students face in understanding the undefined "power of darkness", hints of which lurk throughout Scripture (e.g. evil spirits, the forces of evil unleashed at the end of Revelation etc.), and also in defining the apparently super-human power of righteousness which the Psalms and New Testament especially speak of. At present these topics seem to defy close definition- until we appreciate the Angelic basis behind them?

Joash did right before God whilst the priest Jehoiada was alive, and then apostasized; Uzziah did likewise, with Zechariah the priest (2 Chron. 24:2; 26:5). He didn't reflect upon the personal implications of Divine history. And we too must appreciate that there are Bible characters whose experiences are framed in terms directly relevant to us- for our learning. Interestingly, straight after Jehoiada died, the princes of the land came to Joash with a request, which he wrongly listened to. This has great similarities with the tragic mistake made by Rehoboam after Solomon died (2 Chron. 10:3,4 cp. 24:17). So Joash was given chance after chance to be directed back to previous examples and be instructed by them- but he went on in his own way.

The Angelic *elohim* "helped" Uzziah in his battles; and yet within the same context we read that his human armies "helped" him (2 Chron. 26:7,13). The Angelic armies in Heaven are seen reflected in the human armies of Israel upon earth. The human armies are described as helping Uzziah with "mighty power", a phrase elsewhere used about the mighty power which God alone gives (the same two words occur in this context in Dt. 8:18; Zech. 4:6). And David learnt all this in practice, when he reflected how human armies *alone* lack this 'mighty power'- all human strength is not strength at all unless it's operating in tandem with God's Angelic strength: "There is no king saved by the multitude of a host: A mighty man is not delivered by great strength" (Ps. 33:16).

2 Chron. 31:2 [Heb.] speaks of Jerusalem and especially the temple as the city of the hosts of the Lord- as if the Angelic hosts were especially present in the temple. See on Ps. 78:60

The historical account emphasises that Rabshakeh continually reminded them of the strength of the hand of the Assyrians; the phrase occurs six times in 2 Chron. 32:13-15 alone. The hand of the Lord is an Angelic title; as if he was really mocking the Angel of Israel. There are also many references in Isaiah to the arm of the Lord delivering Israel at this time, which is again an Angelic title. Similarly, the latter day Assyrian will be destroyed by the arm of the Lord, as manifest in Christ and the Angels with Him.

In the practical business of being stimulated to see how the Angels work in our lives, it is interesting to think of how our guardian Angel may ask other Angels to help Him in giving us the help He sees we need. Thus when the "Angel of the Lord went forth in the camp of the Assyrians" or "the Lord

sent forth an Angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour in the camp of the king of Assyria" (2 Chron. 32:21) we infer that this was Michael, the Angel Prince who stands for God's people Israel, going into action. Whilst the action is rightly attributed to Him, there seems no doubt that He brought this about by the use and control of other Angels, activated (as in many of the visions of Angelic judgement in Revelation) by a loud cry from the Angel which brought other Angels into action- "through the voice of the Lord (singular) shall the Assyrian be beaten down" (Is. 30:31). But the language used elsewhere in Isaiah to describe the destruction of the Assyrians is reminiscent of the cherubim, implying multitudes of Angels at work to bring about God's purpose in this.

God forsook Hezekiah, to reveal perhaps *to Hezekiah himself* what was in his heart- for God already knew, surely, without any experimentation (2 Chron. 32:31). Unless this refers to Angels 'experimenting' to understand Hezekiah better? Perhaps this means that the Angel physically left him, which would imply that the contents of our heart tends to be conditioned by our sense of the presence of the Angel, or of God's near presence, and God wants to see what our heart is really like without our sensing of His presence being immediately close to us. This may have been why the Angel left Jesus on the cross, so that His spiritual mind would be fully manifested to God and the Angels.

33:12,13 There is no lack of evidence that later Bible characters found inspiration in Samson, especially in their weakness. Manasseh is an example (2 Chron. 33:12,13 = Jud. 16:19,28)

We sometimes tend to excuse ourselves on the basis of only being products of our background. But eight year old Jehoiachin reigned a mere three months and ten days: and God's comment was that " he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chron. 36:9). we could, of course, make the excuse that his surroundings, his immediate family, his peers...were all idolatrous. But Yahweh evidently didn't see this as any real excuse: he, at sweet eight years old, " did that which was evil" and was punished accordingly. Not only does this give an unusual insight into God's view of responsibility; but it shows that God expects even a child to break away from background influences when they are evil.

It would seem from 2 Chron. 36:21 that the law concerning the land resting every Sabbath year was hardly ever kept, even by the righteous kings. We can imagine how the thinking developed: father didn't do it. grandfather didn't, none of the faithful old kings seemed that interested in it...therefore every time that passage was considered in their study of the Law, it was mentally bypassed. *We are all absolutely expert at this kind of bypass.*

1:1 "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus". The Angel acted directly on his heart (or on his guardian Angel?).

It is significant that Ezra and Nehemiah speak of the "God of Heaven" (e.g. Ezra 1:2) whilst Zechariah speaks of the "God of the earth" or 'land' of Israel, perhaps because the Angel of Israel literally went to Heaven when the glory departed from Jerusalem, and returned, in a sense, at the restoration- to depart again at Christ's death ("Your house is left unto you desolate"; of the Angel that once dwelt in the temple).

1:8 Sheshbazzar - see on Jer. 23:5

4:24- see on Zech. 3:1

5:1- see on Hag. 1:2

5:5 "The eye of their God (the Angel) was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease" (building).

They separated / purged, and then, within a few years, we read of them doing so again. Initially, the exiles separated from the peoples of the land (Ezra 6:21); by 9:1 they are in need of separating again; and by 10:11 likewise; then they separate (10:16), only to need another call to separation by the time of Neh. 9:2; 13:3. They obviously found it extremely difficult to be separated *from* the surrounding world *unto* God's law (Neh. 10:28).

6: 22 "The Lord had made them (Israel) joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel" (the God of Jacob- an Angelic term for the Angel that stands for Israel). Note the emphasis on the Angel directly working on human hearts.

1:3 the walls had been ruined by Samaritan opposition- cp. Ezra 4:12. This isn't a reference to what the Babylonians did.

1:6 eyes open- an allusion to 1 Kings 8:29, where the understanding was that God's eyes would be open to the temple. But Nehemiah understands now that God's eyes are open directly to his prayer. He was brought and led to the understanding that direct personal contact with God is possible without the trappings of religion- even the religion which He has instituted. We're all brought to the same. Notice Nehemiah's loneliness and being alone with God in 2:12-16.

1:7,8- see on Ex. 34:27

1:9 If ye turn... This is grace; Judah in captivity didn't keep the commandments, but the regathering was done anyway, such was God's yearning for His people.s

1:11 grant him mercy in the sight- these 3 Hebrew words are taken from 1 Kings 8:50: " And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: ". Nehemiah knew those words, and had thought and prayed himself into the situation; so it was appropriate to quote them. Prepared prayer should involve such relevant Bible quotations.

1:11 *attentive*- s.w. 2 Chron. 6:40; 7:15, where we read of God being "attentive" to prayers offered in the temple. But Nehemiah is praying in Babylon, not in the temple. The desperation of the situation made him learn a lesson- that God wasn't only accessible in the

temple. This may sound obvious to us, but it wasn't for those used to the temple cult. The lesson is that God uses punishments for sin, hard situations, to break our paradigms and lead us to a greater spirituality- if we will follow. S.w. also Neh. 9:34- Israel weren't "attentive" to God's word, but in their time of need they hoped He would be "attentive" to their word of prayer. And He was. His grace isn't 'measure for measure'; He treats us out of proportion to our attentiveness to Him. We must show the same grace.

2:2 *sad*- s.w. 1:3 affliction. Nehemiah was so identified with his people that their situation was his, to the point of it subconsciously affecting his body language. Likewise the Lord Jesus bore our sins and human condition in His own body on the cross; His identification with us is to be reflected in our identification with others, to the point that their condition affects our body language. But the Hebrew word translated "sad" is usually translated 'evil' or 'wicked'- it could be that the King was suspicious of some bad motive in what Nehemiah had in his heart. Therefore Nehemiah's desperate outburst was an amazing turn around- one moment the king was suspicious that his cupbearer was planning something against him, the next- he was giving Nehemiah amazing blessing. Such paranoia and fickleness would have been typical in ancient kings.

2:4-6 . Neh. 2:4,5 have many similarities with Esther 4:8; 5:14; 8:5; as 2:2 fearful of being sad before the King = Esther 4:2 not allowed to come before the King in sackcloth. Neh. 2:6 the queen = Esther? Clearly her example inspired Nehemiah.

Making request before the King for his people (Neh. 2:4)	Making request before the King for her people
after fasting (Neh. 1:4)	after fasting (Es. 4:16)
If it please the King and if I have found favour in his eyes (Neh. 2:5)	If it please the King and if I have found favour (Es. 8:5)

Neh. 4:5 "Let not their sin be blotted out from before Thee"- both good and bad works are written in the book of life.

"The heavenly host bows down before you" (Neh. 9:6) - a reference to the court of Heaven.

The elohim "found" Abraham's heart to be faithful (Neh. 9:8). This was by a process of research and drawing of conclusions, just as they did with the case of Sodom in Gen. 18. And our Angels are in the process of doing the same with us this very day.

9:19-24 see on Hag. 2:4

9:20- see on 1 Sam. 10:9

It may be fair comment on the character of Samson that he was a man who never quite made it, and therefore didn't achieve the potential deliverance which would have been possible. However, this must dovetail with the fact that Israel's deliverance at the hands of the judges was related to their crying to Yahweh in faith and repentance (Neh. 9:27,28). It seems that they did precious little of this during the time of Samson, from what we know of them from the record. Therefore Samson didn't deliver them as far as he potentially could have done. And yet in God's perfect planning, this worked together with the fact that Samson himself limited the deliverance he could achieve by his moral weakness.

Neh. 9:28,31 use the same Hebrew word for forsake / abandon in two senses. "You abandoned them to the hand of their enemies...but in your great mercy you did not abandon them" (N.I.V.). God forsook Israel, but heard them when they cried and came back to them; but in the ultimate sense He did not forsake them because of His grace and mercy. Thus Zion feels forsaken by God, but ultimately realizes this was never the case (Is. 49:14). It will then seem as just for a small moment that God forsook her (Is. 54:6,7). So when we read in Neh. 9:28 that "You abandoned them", it may be that this is God talking through the perceptions of His people- they thought He had abandoned them, He appeared to have abandoned them, when He ultimately hadn't. And this was one of Israel's experiences which God's Son suffered on the cross.

In Nehemiah's time, the people "separated themselves *from* the peoples of the lands *unto* the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters...they *clave to* their brethren" (Neh. 10:28,29). Close fellowship with one's brethren arises from having gone out *from* the surrounding world, *unto* the things of God's word. That, at least, was the theory. In reality, those exiles who returned found this separation very difficult. In fact, the account of Judah's separation from the surrounding peoples reads similar to that of the purges from idolatry during the reign of the kings.

Nehemiah was inspired by Samson (Jud. 16:28 = Neh. 13:22,31)

1:1 eschewed evil- see on Ps. 34:14

Job was the "greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1:3), the Hebrew implying the eldest, the most senior. The friends were older than Job, and take pleasure in reminding him of the wisdom of the 'elders'. He had risen above his place, got too great too quick, and therefore they were intent on proving to him that actually he was not so great, he had sinned, and they by their supposed wisdom and understanding were really greater than him. And they bent their theology, their guesswork as to his possible sins, to that subconscious end- of justifying themselves and pulling Job down beneath them by their interpretations of his misfortunes. What this indicates is that during their period of 'friendship' previously, they had nursed unconscious feelings of jealousy against him. The lesson for us is to re-examine our friendships, our loyalties, to see if they carry the same feature; a desire to 'be in with' the popular and the successful, to catch some reflected glory. The conversion of Job led him to understand the fickleness of his friends, and to pray for them in it.

"Sons of God" of 1:6 are interpreted as Angels in 38:7.

Eliphaz reminds Job that the wicked of Noah's time were destroyed by a flood, implying that the sudden calamities of Job's life were like the flood, thus equating him with the world at Noah's time. Jude, Daniel, Peter and the Lord Jesus all interpret that world as representing apostate Jewry in the first century, destroyed by the "flood" of AD70. It is therefore interesting that 1 Pet.5:8,9, concerning the Jewish devil walking around seeking to draw away Christians, is quoting the Septuagint of Job 1:7, suggesting Job's satan is also to be linked with the Jewish satan.

1:7 to and fro- In the same way it has been suggested that Job's satan was an Angel wanting to find out more about Job, not understanding how a man with all the blessings Job had could sincerely worship God. God therefore gave this Angel the power needed to try Job to see whether this was the case. The idea of an Angel being called a satan (adversary) is familiar to us in Num. 22:22 where the Angel stood in the way of Balaam for an adversary. The fact the Angel brought the trials would explain why all through the book the trials are credited to God. Satan coming "from going to and fro in the earth" (Job 1:7) would connect with the descriptions of the Angels being God's eyes going to and fro in the earth (Zech. 1:11). Job 1:16 describing God sending a flame of fire to minister one of the trials is understood in the Angel context when one recalls that He "makes His ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. 104:4). The series of "messengers" who come to Job announcing the trials (Job 1:14) may possibly also be Angels, or Angels controlling human messengers on earth. Job associates his trials with God's eyes being upon him (e. g. Job 7:8) and we have seen that the eyes of God seems to be a synonym for the Angels.

1:7,8 "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?". God knew what the satan Angel's response would be. Thus God guides an Angel to think about a believer- or person- in order to further that Angel's spiritual education. This is still necessary, despite them having "had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" previously. The knowledge of good and evil which the Angels have is exactly the same as we have- "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil" the Angels lamented in Eden (Gen. 3:22). Despite our experience of life, we appreciate pitifully little how God works through evil. Some can scarcely comprehend it, especially if they have no knowledge of the Truth. Yet by nature they have some dull concept of it- and it is this dim concept which the Angels possessed in Eden, which was shared with us by Adam's eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Thus we can understand why the Angels need to be educated like this.

1:10- see on 2:3

1:12 sent forth- See on Is. 37:36

1:14 messengers- see on 1:7 . "And there came a messenger (Heb. 'malak') unto Job" with news of the calamities brought by the satan Angel. It would be understandable if that 'malak' should have been translated 'Angel' seeing there is so much other Angelic language in this area.

The Sabaeans of 1:15 were probably the descendants of Sheba, Abraham's grandson (Gen. 25:1-3). For his children to grow into a separate tribe, the events of Job must have happened some generations before the Law was given.

1:16 fire- see on 1:7

1:16,19 Job's sons were killed by wind and fire- both of which are associated with Angelic manifestation.

2:3- see on 7:17

2:3 "Hast thou considered My servant Job?" God asked the Angel. Presumably the Satan Angel was not therefore Job's 'guardian', as if he was he would have obviously been 'considering' him. In this case, other Angels can get involved in our lives apart from our guardian, either by direct discussion with God or by application to our guardian. Or are different Angels our guardians for different periods? Satan's query "Hast not Thou made an hedge about him?" (1:10) may be an example of one Angel questioning another, in this case Job's guardian Angel. Yet later Job accuses 'God' of hedging him in by giving him both good and evil. Thus his initial guardian Angel may have been replaced by the 'Satan'-Angel during the time of his distress.

2:3 "Thou movedst Me against him (Job), to destroy him without cause", God rebuked the Angel. This shows that Angels have to persuade God to do things, which sometimes they are unsuccessful in due to their lack of spiritual perspective in the things they request; exactly like us in our wrestlings in prayer with God through our Angel. If God agrees, He "performeth the counsel (advice) of His messenger" (Angels; Is. 44:26). "To destroy him" implies "to ruin him" (N. I. V.)- which did happen to Job. Thus the Angel appears to have gained his request, despite God in some ways being unwilling, or disliking, the request. "Move" means to prick or stimulate- God can be moved or provoked to action by the Angels, as human beings can provoke Him to anger.

2:4 "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life". 'Skin for skin' is a human expression- maybe based on trading one animal skin for another. Is this inspiration's way of expressing in human language the Satan Angel's conversation with God, or do Angels use such human metaphors in their talking to God? We and other believers in the Biblical record tend to- so why not Angels too? The mighty Angel of Rev. 18 speaks of Babylon as "the habitation of devils (demons), and the hold of every foul spirit. . ." (Rev. 18:2), as if He is using the language of the day concerning demon possession.

In Job 2:5 Satan asks God: "Put forth Thine hand". The hand of God is an Angelic phrase. God agrees- "he is in thine hand" (v. 6). Thus Satan's hand is God's hand, which is an Angel. Job seems to emphasize the place of God's hand in bringing his trials- 2:5,6,10; 6:9; 10:7; 13:21; 19:21; 27:11 AVmg; 28:9. Job in 12:9 feels that in the same way as God's hand had created the natural creation- and the Angels did this- so that same Angelic hand was upon him for evil. "By His Spirit (God makes His Angels spirits) He hath garnished the Heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent" (26:13). Thus Job associates God's Spirit with His hand, which is Satan's hand. It seems far more fitting that this hand and spirit should be Angelic rather than human. Again, it was Angelic work that formed the Heavens. Job recognized that his trials came from the hand of God, but knew that His hand would not kill him- "with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me. . . howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to (bring me to) the grave" (30:21,24). This was exactly the brief given to Satan- to try Job, but "preserve his life". The hand of God creating evil (2:10,11) must surely refer to God's "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49) rather than to man- Cyrus had to be taught that no one except God (including human Satans!) created evil (Is. 45:5-7).

Isaiah's description of Israel as " from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness...but wounds, and bruises and putrifying sores" (Is. 1:6) is couched in the picture of Job " with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job 2:7). As if Job represents apostate Israel.

2:10 evil- - see on Job 2:5

2:11-see on Job 19:12-14. 2:11 the friends came " to mourn with him and to comfort him" , although Job said he turned to them for comfort in vain (16:2). The Hebrew in 2:11 is identical to that in Ps.69:20, describing Christ looking in vain for comforters.

The descriptions of the elders of Zion sitting on the ground in mourning for Jerusalem in Lam.2:10 recalls the friends mourning for Job- thus associating both them and Job with a condemned Israel (Job 2:12).

Another connection with Is.53 is in 2:12,13. The friends " knew him not" as the Jews also did not recognize Christ because of the great physical torment (Is.52:14; 53:3). Like those who crucified Christ " they sat down" watching him; cp. " and sitting down they watched him there" .

The description of Miriam in Num.12:12 LXX is quoting from Job 3:16 LXX; as if both Job and Miriam represented apostate Israel.

3:23- see on Job 10:11,12; Is. 40:27

There are some very evident ways in which Job spiritually grew. For example, he originally said that his life previous to his afflictions had not been a life of ease (Job 3:26); but as a result of his suffering, he realized that actually it had been " at ease" (Job 16:12)

Another telling point of contact with Isaiah is found in 4:3-5. Job had " strengthened the weak hands..and..the feeble knees. But now it (the weakness and feeble knees) is come upon thee, and thou faintest" . This is picked up in Is.35:3,4: " Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful (Heb.'hasty'- both are relevant to Job) heart, Be strong...behold, your God will come" . Thus Job is a type of the weak-hearted Jews, and his final deliverance thus points forward to the coming of the Lord.

It may be that Job's satan Angel was the Angel representing the three friends (satans) of Job. Because of His close identification with them, the satan Angel spoke their thoughts as if they were his own- e. g. compare Eliphaz's thoughts of 4:5 with satan's words of 1:9,10.

4:8- see on Gal. 6:7,8,13

Having limited knowledge, the Angels are capable of acting too hastily- thus Job 4:18 "His Angels He charged with folly" (the Hebrew for 'folly' can imply 'over-action'). God uses the inter-play of the Angels to restrain them in their actions, seeing they are often dependent on authority from each other in order to implement their plans. that this is concerning literal Angels and not men is shown by the contrast in v. 19- "how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay", i. e. men. If God cannot treat His Angels as equal to Him, "in whom He put light" (AVmg.), how much less can He treat men?. "The stars (Angels?) are not pure in His sight" (Job 25:5). Because of this we read in Ps.

113:5 "The Lord our God exalteth Himself to dwell on High (A. V. mg.), who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in Heaven (the Angels) and in the earth".

Eliphaz cruelly mocked his spiritual isolation: " Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints (in the ecclesia) wilt thou turn?" (5:1). Job's desire for real spiritual friendship grew so intense that he comes to visualize an ideal friend, who would not only appreciate his every grief, but who would offer more than commiseration. He came to long for one who would reconcile him with the righteousness of God. Naturally, he would have had in mind Abraham's promised seed. His mind was therefore being prepared to desire the coming of Messiah; in prospect, he was developing a personal understanding and appreciation of the Lord Jesus. In all this, Job is our glorious example. There can be very few who have not experienced the terror of complete spiritual isolation, longing for understanding and true appreciation, but finding none within the ecclesia whom they can turn to. As we look back from our traumas to the glorious reality of Christ's existence, so Job looked forward to it.

5:7 "Man is born unto trouble, as the sons of the burning coal lift up to fly" (AVmg.) is using Angel-Cherubim language to say that it is inevitable that our Angels will bring trials into our lives.

Job 5:11 is quoted in Prov.3:11, which is a prophecy of Christ . Prov.3:13-15 describes our Lord's successful finding of wisdom in the language of Job's unsuccessful search for it in Job 28:16-19, implying He found what Job did not (cp. Rom.9:31,32).

Paul makes one of the direct quotes from Job in the New Testament: " For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor.1:19). This is quoting Job 5:12,13, where Eliphaz is explaining why he thinks Job and his view of life have been brought to nothing. Thus Paul read Job as a type of those who were influenced by the pseudo-wisdom of the Judaizers. Paul continues: " Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?" (1 Cor.1:20). Job's constant desire to dispute with God and the friends, and the claims both he and they made to possessing wisdom, show Job was clearly in Paul's mind. " Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" he concludes, maybe thinking of the humbled Job.

5:19- see on Ps. 91:10

The way Eliphaz speaks of how Job's seed or offspring could be many or "great...as the grass of the earth" (Job 5:25) suggests the people of Job's time were familiar with the promises made to Abraham, and the concept of their being applicable to them too.

When Eliphaz says that the righteous "Will die at the height of your powers, and be *gathered* like ripened grain" (Job 5:26, Stephen Mitchell's translation), there is an evident connection with the account of Moses being *gathered* at his death, and dying with his natural faculties undiminished. Moses is presented as the epitome of the righteous believer.

6:9,10 "Oh. . that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off. . . I have not concealed the words of the Holy One". We have shown that God's hand was satan's hand and that the satan Angel was forbidden to "cut (Job) off" as both Job and the Angel requested. Job associates the satan with the Holy One, which is also Angelic language. Job being a prophet (see 19:8), he would have received revelation from an Angel. He did not conceal the word of this "Holy One".

Job's sacrifice of a truly broken spirit was worth more than thousands of apposite words. Job had dimly imagined that this would be so: "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred" (6:24). When Elihu *did* teach him and show him that he was erring by *nature* rather than specific sin, Job truly held his tongue: "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth...I will not answer...I will proceed no further" (40:4,5; notice the threefold repetition). This is one of several examples of Job knowing the truth in abstract theory, but not appreciating it until the mixture of reflection on his trials and Elihu / Jesus, brought it home.

Job had worked his way up in the world (from being an orphan, 6:27?) without consciously seeking prosperity (1:10 AVmg.; 8:7; 31:25), and had shared his blessings with others; he realized at least in theory the weakness of his nature; and yet when he examined himself, he really didn't think he was too monstrous a sinner.

Job being fatherless (6:27) and being able to echo our Lord's "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" with "Is there iniquity in my tongue?" (6:30) are just some of many shadows of Christ to be found throughout the record of Job. Most comfortingly, these shadows suggest that our Lord suffered the almost manic levels of depression experienced by Job, especially in His final passion.

Their belief that they possessed such great wisdom led the Jews to be self-righteous, in that they reasoned that if they were wicked, then their wisdom would reveal this to them. Job and the Jews were similar in this- "Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste ('palate'- i.e. spiritual sensitivity, Song 5:6; Ps.119:103) discern perverse (evil) things?" (6:30). Job was one of the greatest of the children of the East (1:3)- famed for their 'wisdom'.

Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration and the Kingdom are shot full of allusions back to Job. The cry that Zion's warfare or "appointed time" is now ended (Is. 40:2) is taken straight out of Job 7:1; indeed, Job 7:3-7 describes Job's haggard life in the same terms as Israel in dispersion are described in Isaiah 40. The point being, that Job's eventual re-conversion and salvation is a pattern for that of all God's people.

Job came to recognize that every moment he existed was a trial to him, sent by his satan-Angel. Thus he complained "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" (7:1). The Hebrew for "appointed time" is exactly the same as for "host" as in hosts of Angels. This neatly connects the idea that the exact duration of his life was controlled by God's Angel-host, as was every trial which he experienced. This would be the work of the "wonderful numberer" Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls all time periods. Job 14:13,14 says the same: "O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave. . . if a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come". His appointed tihou dost magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thy heart upon him? (lit. 'consider him')" (7:17). Thus Job sees God- whom he probably conceived of as an Angel- as considering him, whilst we are told earlier that satan was told to do this. A human satan considering Job would not in itself have brought the trials, and Job would not have complained so bitterly about a human being considering him. An Angelic satan setting his heart upon Job would account for this 'considering' alone leading to the trials. If it is argued that it is a human satan who set his heart on Job here in Job 7, then the context is hard, though not impossible, to square: "Thou dost magnify man. . . Thou preserver of men" (v. 20,21). There is some hint of physical movement by 'God' which would seem applicable to the Angel too: "Thou shouldest visit him. . . depart from me. . . let me alone" (v. 18,19).

It is unlikely that Job's period of affliction lasted more than a year or so (Job 7:3), and yet this is the part of his life and spiritual growth that is presented to us in such detail.

7:8- see on 14:3

7:18- see on Heb. 2:6

7:21 is Job complaining to his Angel that "thou shalt seek me in the morning" to give him more trials ("Thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment", v. 18), but would not find him (more language of limitation) because "I shall sleep in the dust. . I shall not be" (i. e. Job thought he would die that night).

9:2- see on Job 27:14

Job complains " He breaketh me...without cause" (9:17); " breaketh" is the same word translated " bruise" in Gen.3:15, thus implying that he is receiving the result of the covenant in Eden for no reason. Jesus must have been sorely tempted to adopt the same false reasoning of his great type. The references earlier in Job 9 to God spreading out the Heavens and creating the stars show Job's mind at this time was set early in Genesis (v.8-10). See on 10:9; 13:20-22

In Job 9:21 and by implication in other places, Job effectively says that there is no point in serving God or striving for obedience to God. This is what the priests of Israel later said: " It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" (Mal.3:14). Elihu claimed that Job " hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself in God" (34:9)- i.e. keep the commands of God, seeing that the Hebrew for " delight" often occurs in the context of obedience to the word. The Malachi passage is more specifically alluding to Job 21:7,15: " What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" . These are the words of Job, complaining about the prosperity of the wicked who had such an attitude, and the carefree happiness of their lives: " Their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ" (21:11,12). It is in this that the Malachi context is so significant, for Mal.3:15 continues : " We (the Israelites) call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up" . This was also Job's view. Notice that Job is probably implying that his prosperous three friends were among the wicked whom he is describing, thus associating them with the corrupt Jewish priesthood.

Job's reliance on works to bring justification with God is clearly seen in 9:29: " If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?" - i.e. 'If I've been condemned, all these good works I've done are vain- they won't give me the salvation I thought'.

9:33- see on 33:6

9:34- see on 21:9

A connection is made between Job and Adam in Job's words of 10:9: " Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt Thou bring me into dust again?" . This is Gen.3:19- the curse upon sinful Adam that he would return to the dust. Job seems to be admitting that he is like Adam in that it appeared God was going to end his life as a result of his sin- return him to the dust.

But he reasons that this is unfair, seeing he has not sinned (10:7,14,15). Thus he oscillates between saying he has sinned and is like Adam, and then claiming that although he is being treated like Adam this is unfair. See on 9:17; 13:20-22.

10:11,12 Job complains "Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved My spirit". "Fenced" is the same word as "hedge" when satan complains that God has made a hedge about Job. Perhaps the Angel told Job this as well as God. Job is therefore saying that actually the only hedge or fence he has is his own physical body. In 3:23 and 19:8 this hedging seems to be interpreted as a feeling of spiritual restriction- as if like Paul, Job yearned to be released from this body of sin and corruption to "the glorious (spiritual) liberty of the sons of God" (Angels?). Job accepts that the Angel is keeping him alive every moment: "Thy visitation (Angelic language) hath preserved my spirit". We have already suggested that the Angels being spirits give and take the spirit of life from our body. Job seems to be saying 'You (the satan Angel) say I'm hedged about with blessings. But now the only hedge I've got is this sick body. The only help you give me now is to give me my spirit to keep me alive, only so you can torment me more'. Understandable, if faulty, reasoning in Job's situation.

10:20-22- see on Phil. 1:21

Zophar possibly recognized that Job was like Cain in that his countenance had fallen and he was so angry, although also fearful of God (Gen.4:5); he said that if Job repented he would " lift up thy face (countenance) without spot; yea, thou shalt...not fear" (11:15). See on 11:15; 13:27; 16:17,18; 31:39

12:9- see on Job 2:5

12:15- see on 1 Sam. 16:23

12:19- see on 29:13,14

13:9- see on Gal. 6:7,8

13:13-15- see on Phil. 1:20

13:16-see on Phil. 1:19

Job 13:20-22 subtly alludes to Adam's fall:

" Then will I [Job] not hide myself from Thee"	Adam hiding in Eden from God.
" Withdraw Thine hand far from me: and let not Thy dread make me afraid"	Adam's fear and dread as he heard the Lord's voice walking in the garden.
" Then call Thou, and I will answer"	God calling Adam and his answering God with his confession of sin.

It would appear that Job was recognizing that he had sinned, that he knew that the sense of spiritual limbo he was in paralleled Adam's hiding from God in Eden, but that he would only

respond to God's call and come out of hiding to confess his sin as he knew God wanted him to, if God withdrew His hand- i.e. relieved him of the immediate trials he was then experiencing. Thus Job was trying to barter with God- wanting Him to withdraw the trials in return for Job making the confession which he knew God wanted. See on 10:9; 9:17

13:26-28- see on 29:13,14

Job complains that although he is associated with Cain, this is not really fair. " Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet" because of observing his ways with unnecessary detail, Job complained (13:27). The mark on him that was a witness wherever he went echoes that which God put on Cain. God's preservation of Cain from death also finds a parallel in Job's feeling that God is preserving him unnaturally (3:21-23; 10:9-15). See on 11:15; 16:17,18; 31:39

14:3 "Dost thou open Thine eyes (Angels) upon such an one, and bringest me into judgement with Thee?". Job here seems to be able to sense when the Angels were closely present in his life- he seems to be asking why God is using His Angel-eyes to take such a special interest in him; why God has asked His Angel to "consider My servant Job". When Job asks God to 'look away' from him, or remove His eyes from him (Job 7:8,19 RV and frequently in Job), this would then be understood as a reference to God's Angel-eyes, whom Job perceived as bringing about his problems.

14:5 "his (man's) days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee"- i. e. the 'wonderful numberer' Angel of Dan. 8:13 who controls the timing of all things?

14:13,14- see on 7:1

Job recognized that there would come a time when " My change come (when) Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: (I know) Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands" (when I respond to Your call to confess my sin)- 14:14,15. It would appear from this that Job feels that there will be a call to resurrection corresponding to God's call of Adam out of hiding (v.13 " Oh that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave"), after which he would confess his sins- i.e. at the judgement. God's calling to Job out of the whirlwind and Job's subsequent confession at the end of the book again encourages us to see " the end of the Lord" with Job as pointing forward to our justification at the day of judgement and the Kingdom. See on 14:20

In his humbler moments Job recognized that he was a sinner and deserved Adam's punishment: " Thou changest his (man's) countenance, and sendeth him away" (14:20)- referring to Adam being sent out of Eden, or also to Cain's countenance falling and then being sent away from God. See on 31:33; 9:17; 10:9

Eliphaz told Job " Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee" (15:6). This is picked up by Christ in his words to the one-talent man in the parable: " Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee" (Lk. 19:22) . The man was condemned for keeping his talent (his spiritual knowledge of the word) to himself rather than sharing it with others. Eliphaz proceeds to make the same rebuke of Job- although he had " heard the secret of God" , which we have seen

implies the gift of prophesying the word, he "restrained wisdom unto thyself" (v.8). This confirms that Christ's one-talent man of the parable is based on Job, thus making him represent the rejected at judgement. No doubt the primary application of the one-talent man was to the Jewish believers of Christ's day who did not capitalize on the talent they already had. The taking away of the talent and its being given to others recalls the Kingdom (i.e. the Gospel of the Kingdom) being taken from the Jews and being given to a nation bringing forth the fruits of it (cp. trading the talent).

The friends ridiculed Job's evident comparison of himself with Adam: "Art thou (the emphasis is on that phrase) the first man (Adam; 1 Cor.15:45 alludes here) that was born?" (15:7). See on 31:33; 9:17; 10:9

"Dost thou hearken in the council of God?" (Job 15:8 RVmg.) is the language of the Heavenly throne room- note how this is said in the context of Job, where we have the most classic statement of the operation of the court of heaven in the opening chapters.

The priest's duty was to expound the word of God (Mal.2:7; Hos.4:6): Job being a prophet also meant that he had a prominent role to play in the instruction of the people. It appears that as a prophet he was faithful- he spoke what God said. The friends were also prophets, seeing that in 15:8,9 they say that they have been given the same "secret" (i.e. inspiration) and knowledge of God as Job had. However, they did not accurately speak forth what they were inspired with as Job did (42:7). But as the priests of Israel misled the people by faulty reasoning ostensibly based on the word, so Job too was in error as a priest.

It can be shown that James read Job in a bad light insofar as he saw him as a type of the rich, Judaist-influenced Jews in the first century ecclesia who proudly despised their brethren. Eliphaz says that Job's sudden problems amid his prosperity were what would happen to all the wicked (15:21). This seems to be alluded to in 1 Thess.5:3 concerning the sudden destruction of rich, spiritually self confident believers. Job's words of 30:1 certainly smack of arrogance: "Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock". This would mean that his merciful acts to the poor were done in a 'charitable' spirit, thinking that such public acts declared him outwardly righteous: "I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (by his charity). I (thereby) put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem" (29:13,14).

16:9 Job sees God as "mine adversary / enemy" (Job 16:9 RV); he understood God to be the satan.

Job's tender love and appreciation of God ("He sheweth Himself marvellous upon me") is countered by his rage against God for *hating* him (16:9). Such wild fluctuations indicate more than the unstable brain chemistry of clinical depression. They are part of the spiritual adolescence which we each go through, in some form, as we go through our re-conversions, growing up into the maturity of the spirit of Christ. The briefest examination of our own ways, coupled with a true appreciation of human sinfulness, will show that our spiritual level wildly fluctuates. How many times have we walked away from close fellowship with Yahweh and His Son at the memorial table, to then do the grossest despite to the spirit of grace- even if it be 'just' in a hard word or thought.

16:9 "He gnasheth upon me with His teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth His eyes upon me". In the context, Job seems to be perceiving God as his enemy, and God's eyes often refer to the Angels.

16:12- see on 3:26

In 16:17,18 Job instead associates himself with unfairly persecuted Abel: " Not for any injustice in my hands...O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry (of my blood) have no place" (16:17,18 cp. the crying of Abel's blood from the ground in Gen.4:10). See on 11:15

The astonishment of the Jews at the ghastly physical appearance of Christ on the cross (Is.52:14) is matched by Job 17:7,8: " All my members are as a shadow..men shall be astonished at this" (i.e. the state of his body). Jo

18:13 - see on Ex. 12:23

18:18 chase- see on Dt. 29:21

19:8- see on Job 10:11,12

19:8 God (the Angel) "hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and He hath set darkness in my paths". This seems remarkably similar to the Angel satan barring the path of Balaam that he could not pass (Num. 22:22-27). Job and Balaam have certain similarities- both were prophets (in Job's case see 4:4; 23:12; 29:4 cp. 15:8; Amos 3:7; James 5:10,11); both had genuine difficulty in understanding God's ways, but they to varying degrees consciously rebelled against what they did understand; both thus became angry with God (in the Angel), and were reprovved by God through being brought to consider the Angel-controlled natural creation.

Job represents both Christ and Israel. This is nicely shown in 19:12-14: " His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp around about my tabernacle" . This is reminiscent of the descriptions of the Roman armies (Christ's armies- Mt.22:7) surrounding Jerusalem in AD70. There then follows a description of Job's sufferings which has clear links with that of Christ's crucifixion in Ps.69. " He hath put my brethren far from me (cp. Ps.69:8), and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me" . Note how the last phrase links with Christ's description of Judas as " my own familiar friend" , implying there may be a connection between the one-time friends of Job, and Judas. Both epitomized the Jewish system, and both were at one stage trusted by Job/Jesus. Other descriptions of Job's sufferings in the language of Ps.69 include Job 30:9 " Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword" (cp. Ps.69:12); 22:11 " abundance of waters cover thee" (cp. Ps.69:1,2); 2:11 the friends came " to mourn with him and to comfort him" , although Job said he turned to them for comfort in vain (16:2). The Hebrew in 2:11 is identical to that in Ps.69:20, describing Christ looking in vain for comforters.

In Job 19 we see how the friends ended up playing God. They presumed to judge Job according to their own limited and inaccurate theology, by assuming that he must have sinned in order to receive such terrible trials from God. Zophar claims to have revealed Job's guilt, and then says that "the heavens"- an elipsis for "God"- have revealed Job's guilt (Job 20:27). Job figured out what was happening when he complained to them: "Why do you hound me as though you were divine?" (Job 19:22 NAB). But something good came out of all this for Job. The way the friends played God set up a kind of dialectic, from which Job came to perceive more powerfully who God really was- and, moreover, how in fact this God would ultimately save him rather than destroy and condemn him, as the friends falsely thought. By 'dialectic' I mean that the way the friends presented a false picture and manifestation of God's judgment led Job to react against it, and thereby come to a true

understanding of God's judgment. Having stated his perception that the friends are indeed playing God (Job 19:22), Job goes straight on to make a solemn and important statement. The solemnity of it is witnessed by his request that what he was now going to say would be inscribed in rock with the point of a diamond as a permanent record (Job 19:24). And that solemn statement was that he knew that God would be his vindicator at the last day, that he would "see God", that he would have a bodily resurrection, and that at that time it would be the friends who would be condemned (Job 19:25-29). This supreme statement of faith, hope and understanding was elicited from Job because of the rejection he suffered from his friends, and the way they so inaccurately and wrongly played God in wrongly condemning him on God's behalf. Job thus came to long for the judgment seat. There are few believers who have reached that level of intimacy with God- but Job did, thanks to the way his friends so cruelly turned against him. And this is a major lesson we can take from being the victim of slander, misunderstanding and misjudgment by our own brethren.

19:26 "In my flesh shall I see God". Throughout the Old Testament there are examples of men being terrified at the idea that they had seen God in the flesh- Manoah and Isaiah are obvious examples. Because of this, it is unlikely that Job would talk in such a way about seeing God Himself in person face to face. It is therefore far more likely that Job conceived of 'God' as God manifested in an Angel. The same reasoning can be applied to 42:5: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee". Job presumably felt that now he more fully understood the ways in which God worked with him- through the satan-Angel.

19:26- see on 42:5

As Job's emphasis on the coming of Christ and judgment increased, so his concentration on his present sufferings decreased. His heart was consumed within him with desire for that day (19:27 AVmg.). 2 Tim. 4 can be regarded as Paul's most mature spiritual statement, written as it was just prior to his death. In 2 Tim. 4:1,8, Paul's mind was clearly on the second coming and the certainty of judgment. He realized, in that time of undoubted maturity, that the common characteristic of all the faithful would be that they all *loved* the appearing of Christ. This isn't, of course, to say that anyone who loves the idea of Christ's coming will thereby be saved. A true love of His appearing is only possible with a correct doctrinal understanding, and also a certain level of moral readiness for His appearing. But do we *love* the appearing of Christ as Job did? Is it *really* all we have in life? Is our conscience, our faith in the grace of God, our real belief in the blood of the cross, so deep that we *love* the idea of the coming of judgment, that we would fain *hasten* the day of His coming? The graph constructed above shows how Job's *love* of the Lord's coming grew very rapidly. Before, he was too caught up with bitterness about his unspiritual fellow 'believers', effectively justifying himself in the eyes of his ecclesia and his world, full of passive complaints about his own sufferings... and so he didn't *love* that day as he later came to.

20:27- see on 19:22

20:29 "This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage of his decree from God" (AVmg.)- the decree from God is put into action by Angels.

21:5 See on 40:4

21:7- see on 9:21

21:9 "Their houses are safe from fear (cp. Job's, which fell down as a result of the Angel-satan whirlwind), neither is the rod of God upon them". Earlier in 9:34 Job pleaded: "Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me". The fear of God is Angelic language, and it is the same as the rod of God. That rod acted through the satan-Angel.

21:11- see on 9:21

The three friends have similarities with the Jewish system. When Job speaks of " the wicked" he is digging at the friends, as they do at him when they speak of the wicked. Thus he implies in 21:22 that they were trying to " teach God knowledge" - alluded to in Rom. 11:34 and 1 Cor. 2:16, where the Jews are mocked for thinking they can instruct God and be " His counsellor" , thus linking the friends with the Jews.

22:11-see on Job 19:12-14

For the man in good conscience with God "Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee (no mention here of 'if it is His will!'). . thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee" (Job 22:27,28). Absolute faith in prayer which is according to God's broad desires results in our requests effectively being decrees of what is now going to happen! To the present writer this is the only reasonable understanding of the relationship between the 'will' of God and our prayers. It is not difficult for us to know what the will of God in the sense of His desires is. We have been born again by the word of God. We were not born again by the will of man, but by the will of God. The will of God is therefore found in the word of God (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:12-14). Thus if we pray according to our knowledge of God's desires as explained in the word, we are praying according to His will- and therefore if we have faith "He heareth us". Jesus said as much: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what YE will, and it shall be done unto you" (Jn. 15:7). Notice He didn't say 'you will ask whatever is according to God's will , and it will be heard'. We ask whatever we desire, and we will receive. This is because our will should be the will of God if the word of God is in us.

23:3 "Oh that I knew where I might find Him" speaks as if God was a physical being on earth- fitting, if Job conceived of God in terms of an Angel whom he occasionally met.

Job 23:3 perhaps epitomizes this desire of Job for judgment day: "Oh, that today I might find him, that I might come to his judgment seat!" (NAB). He wanted the judgment seat to come that very day! The invisible hand of God is working in every life that suffers from ones' brethren 'playing God' in false judgment of us... to lead us to this wonderful and blessed attitude.

The use of the word "order" in Job's words in 23:3-6 repays examination: " Oh that I knew where I might find (God)! that I might come even to His seat!. I would *order* my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments...Will He plead against me with his great power? No." God, and Elihu, *did* plead against Job by recounting God's power. When Elihu was established in Job's mind as God's true representative, he found that he had nothing to say, as he thought he would have. Elihu seems to refer back to these words when he challenges the dumfounded Job: " If thou hast anything to say, answer me...if thou canst answer me, set thy words in *order* before me" (33:32,5). Job several times spoke of how he would fully explain himself to God, if he found Him. Yet in the presence of God and Elihu, he finds that all the words dry up. Words became irrelevant. All he can do is behold the

majesty of God's righteousness, and declare his own unrighteousness. That spiritual pinnacle of Job still lies ahead for the majority of us. The desire to speak is a desire to express our *own* thoughts. Words are a construct which can trap us. Only *God's* words can liberate. There is a *wordless* element in being truly humbled before the Almighty.

26:13 "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent". Here the hand and Spirit of God are equated- both are Angelic phrases, and thus provides further evidence that the Angels actually performed the creation.

26:13- see on Job 2:5

Job 27:2-4 associates Job's likening of himself to Adam with his false blaming of God for wrongly dealing with him: " God...who hath taken away my judgement; and the Almighty, who hath made my soul bitter (AVmg.); all the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils" . This is obviously referring to the record of God's creation of Adam in Gen.2:7. See on 10:9; 9:17

Job realized his sinfulness, and yet at the same time he was in a quandary over whether he really had sinned. In Job 27:6 he even feels that his heart does not reproach him over any of the days he has ever lived (RV). This is such an accurate caricature of so many Christian consciences, of so much of our self-examination, both individually and collectively. We of course have to admit that we are sinners, riddled with weakness in so many ways; and of course we *do* admit this. And yet there is a quandary over whether we really are big time sinners. We feel ourselves to be little sinners, whatever we may theoretically admit. And as such, we fail to appreciate the grace of God's salvation, and therefore we fail to dynamically respond to this as we should *do*, and thereby our community and our own lives are characterized by the all too evident apathy with which they are; there is so little of the real flame, the fire of true spirituality, which there might be. And dear dear Job, like us, for all his good works, for all his being such a truly and really nice guy and brother, through and through... he had to be brought down to his knees: " I am vile... I know (*now*, by implication) that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee... therefore have I uttered that I understood thee; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" .

Job 27:9,10 seems to be saying [although the Hebrew text is rather obscure] that every man on his deathbed cries to God in some kind of prayer; but a belief in the mortality of man will result in the righteous man having lived a life of prayerful crying to the Father, which will be in context with his final cry to God in his time of dying.

Job comments that if the children of the wicked " be multiplied, it is for the sword" (27:14). Seeing his own children had been destroyed, Job presumably was accepting that he was among the " wicked" , as he does elsewhere (e.g. 9:2). Hos.9:13,16 repeats such language regarding the punishment of sinful Israel: " Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer" . Dt.28:41 has the same idea.

Job in chapter 28 prides himself on his appreciation, as he thought, of God's hand in creation, and how creation reveals the greatness of God. But at the end he was taught that what he thought he so appreciated, he really didn't; and he learnt the true knowledge of God. Unclean animals are brought to his attention in ch. 39; he then repents in 40:2-4, as if he finally saw in them symbols of himself.

And then chapters 40 and 41 go on to speak of the joy of clean animals in their relationship with God, and the inability of man to come between them and their maker.

28:12- see on 42:5

28:16,19- see on Job 5:11

A true sense of our mortality will lead to our prayerful, urgent contact with the Father all our days. Thus destruction and death give insight into the true wisdom (Job 28:22).

That Job was indeed depressed can be seen by the vast number of times Job speaks of " I " or " myself" . There are some 40 occurrences of these words in Chapter 29 alone.

Job was a prophet (Job 29:4 cp. 15:8;23:12; Prov.3:32; Amos 3:7; the secret of God being with him made Job a prophet) and it is in his role as such that he is commended in James 5:10,11- i.e. for the words concerning God which he spoke. The words for which God and Elihu rebuked him were therefore about other things.

29:13- see on 15:21

" I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (by his charity). I (thereby) put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgement was as a robe and a diadem" (29:13,14). This has clear reference to the clothing of the Mosaic High Priest with his outward show of righteousness. Job was probably the family priest, seeing that the head of the household appears to have been the priest in patriarchal times; thus Job could offer a sacrifice for the sins of his children (1:5). Job's likening of himself to a moth-eaten garment due to God's changing of his circumstances (13:26-28) must connect with the disciples of the Law as an old, decaying garment in Heb.8:13. The priestly clothing " for glory and for beauty" (Ex.28:2) is certainly alluded to by God when He challenges Job " Deck thyself *now* (i.e. like you used to) with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty...then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee" (40:10,14)- as if God is saying that Job's previous life represented the Mosaic priestly system with its external pomp and implication that ones own righteousness can bring salvation (" that thine own right hand can save thee"). Job's humiliation meant that, by implication, he no longer felt able to clothe himself with the priestly garments of glory and beauty; he had learnt the spirit of the Christian dispensation, to trust on the grace of God rather than a system of salvation depending on personal righteousness. The descriptions of Job rending his " mantle" (priestly robes) recalls that of Caiaphas; his falling on his face perhaps indicates his recognition that reliance on the outward show of the Law needed to be replaced by humble faith. Job thus described his experiences as God leading " priests away stripped" of their robes (Job 12:19 N.I.V.).

30:1- see on 15:21; Jud. 16:28

30:9-see on Job 19:12-14

30:21,24- see on Job 2:5

God (in the Angel of the presence) "was turned to be (Israel's) enemy" because of their sin (Is. 63:10). Job complains that his satan-Angel has "turned to be cruel to me" (30:21 AVmg.).

31:1,3- see on Mt. 5:27-30

Job complains in 31:3 that "the punishment of his (the wicked man's) iniquity" is deferred to his children; he uses the same Hebrew phrase used regarding the punishment of Cain's iniquity in Gen.4:13, thus saying that it was the wicked of the world, not him, who were the real counterparts of Cain. See on 31:39

31:30- see on Mt. 5:44

In 31:33 Job denies that he is like Adam in that unlike him, he has no sin to hide: "If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity..." . And yet like Adam he was humiliated by God's questioning at the end of the book. Job is associated with Adam several times in the book- see on 9:17; 10:9; 13:20-22

Job 31:39 is another example of Job saying that he was being unfairly treated like Cain: "If I have eaten the strength (of my land) without money...let thistles grow instead of wheat" (31:39,40 AVmg.). This is referring back to the curse on Cain, that "when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength" (Gen.4:12). Job is saying that his land has yielded its strength to him, and that only if he sinned should the Adamic curse of thistles come upon him. We too can resent the limitations of our own nature, not least in the proneness to sin which it gives us, and become bitter against God because of it as Job did. See on 11:15; 13:27; 16:17,18; 31:3

"There is a spirit (capacity to spiritually understand, in the context in which Elihu is speaking) in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). Does in-spirit-ation have something to do with God's Spirit-Angel (Ps. 104:3,4) reviving this spiritual capacity in man?

It may be that Elihu actually wrote the book of Job (32:15,16 imply this). *He* was therefore the fulfilment of Job's desire that someone would sympathetically write his grief and record his mental agonies (19:23).

By justifying himself rather than recognizing God's righteousness, Job was effectively saying that God was *unrighteous* (33:2). We need the re-conversion experience of Job to realize the sinfulness of our every off-hand sin.

The degree to which Elihu was Job's exact representative helps us appreciate the precision of our Lord's representation of us. Indeed this appears to be the role of Elihu in Job. The LXX brings this out well. 33:5,6 give the picture of Elihu asking Job to physically stand up against him, back to back, to bring home how identical they were: "Stand against me, and I will stand against thee. Thou art formed out of the clay as also I: we have been formed out of the same substance" . It seems that Elihu had been through Job's very experiences, of 'death' and rising again: "He has delivered *my* soul from death, that my life may praise him in the light. Hearken, Job, and hear *me*" (33:30,31 LXX). And this is exactly what Job did.

Understanding the real import of the speeches rests largely on a correct understanding of Elihu. Job longed for one like Elihu, who could reconcile God with Job's righteous life, his sufferings, and all his

intellectual doubts. Elihu points out that he is the fulfilment of Job's need (33:6 cp. 9:33). With this, Job has no disagreement. Elihu is to be seen as a type of Christ (see later). The speeches of Job therefore make us see the desperation of man's need for Elihu/Jesus; especially the need of those who lived under the Old Covenant. Job's weakness, morally, physically and intellectually, becomes representative of the weakness of each of us. We breathe a sigh of relief (as Job did too) when Elihu appears on the scene. This matches the moral and intellectual "rest to your souls" which the true believer in Christ experiences; rest from the weight of the mental burdens which the spiritual life imposes. Job's greatest pain was not physical; it was the pain of being misunderstood by those close to him (e.g. his wife, relatives and the friends), the ingratitude of those around him, the agony of knowing that no one had been down the mental path he was being forced along. He longed for his grief to be written in a book, for true recognition to be given to his *desire* for righteousness. He could not turn to his friends, who must have been close to him spiritually at one point.

It might be possible to speculate as to the tone of voice in which Elihu spoke. By contrast to the friends' "hard speeches", Elihu assures Job at the start of their dialogue: "My fear shall not terrify thee, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee" (33:7 LXX). A similar contrast is pointed by Elihu's claim to be speaking as a result of God's spirit within him (32:8), whereas Zophar and the friends spoke from their *own* spirit (20:3). Apart from God's specific confirmation of Elihu's words, Job evidently perceived Elihu to be the answer to his pleas to find God. Job's desire for "a daysman" was answered by Elihu: "I am according to thy wish". Job did not dispute this. If one of the friends had claimed to be such a "daysman", we can imagine Job's indignant denial of it!

Discerning and feeling one's own sinfulness is an undoubted part of conversion. Elihu on God's behalf rebukes Job for thinking that "I am clean without transgression" (33:9,12); and Elihu's exhortation to Job to say "I have sinned" (33:27) is obeyed by Job, as if he accepted the truth of what Elihu was saying. How we see the role of Elihu determines how we understand Job's claims of innocence.

33:23 - see on Ex. 12:23

The return of the prodigal son foreshadowed the final repentance of the Jews (note how that parable is based on Gen.43:16;45:14,15). But Job's decision to say "I have sinned...and it profited me not" (33:27) also connects with the prodigal son (Lk.15:21), thus again associating him with the Jews in their suffering and repentance.

33:30- see on 33:5,6

33:32- see on 23:3-6

Elihu rebukes Job for his self-righteousness: "Let us choose to us judgement: let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job hath said, I am righteous" (34:4,5). This seems to be behind Paul's words in 1 Thess. 5:21 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good", which is in the context of using "prophesyings" (v.20)- i.e. the true word of God- to analyse and reject false Judaist teaching that was claimed to be inspired. Thus Elihu is interpreted as the true prophet of God and Job as a false reasoner, doing so under the guise of speaking the Truth, seeing he was a prophet.

34:18 "Is it fit to say to a King (God), Thou art wicked? and to princes (Angels), ye are ungodly?". Here Elihu (speaking on God's behalf), is rebuking Job for wrongly accusing the Angels, who had brought the trials.

34:29 see on 1 Sam. 16:23

The place of Elihu is vital in understanding the message of Job. As typical of Christ, *he* was the resolution to all Job's problems. His speeches produced a true self-realization within Job, rather than compounding his agony, as the words of the friends did. Comparison of the following passages will show how Elihu is indeed God's representative; note that his words are not rebuked by God at the end, whilst those of the friends are:

Elihu	God
34:35	38:2; 42:3
33:13	40:2
33:2	40:8
33:9	35:2

God emphasizes that He was not looking for any specific sin of Job's to be revealed, as a result of the trials (35:15). The whole purpose of the tests upon Job could therefore have been related to how he would use them to help others, and the lessons and inspiration they would give to others (2 Cor. 1:4). Elihu's description of God's inspiration of him, resulting in it being painful not to speak forth the words given, recalls Jeremiah's experience as the result of his inspiration: " I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out..His word was...shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing" (Jer. 6:11; 20:9). Elihu's words are so similar that there must be a connection: " I am full of words (Hebrew), the Spirit (of inspiration) within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles" (Job 32:18,19). This similarity between these two young prophets (n.b. Job 32:6) may be because Jeremiah was reprimanding Israel, whilst Elihu was doing so to Job and the friends who represented Israel.

36:13 There are several allusions to Job in Romans, all of which confirm that Job is set up as symbolic of apostate Israel. A simple example is Elihu's description of Job as a hypocrite heaping up wrath (36:13), which connects with Paul's description of the Jews as treasuring up unto themselves " wrath against the day of wrath" (Rom.2:5).

36:32 see on 1 Sam. 16:23

God's amazing control of events in the natural world is surely through Angelic influence. God gives the lightning- often associated with Angels- a specific charge [as He does to His Angels] that it "strike the mark" (Job 36:32 RV).

38:7- see on Rev. 1:20

God consciously makes the sun rise each day (Job 38:12)- it isn't part of a kind of perpetual motion machine. Hence the force of His promises in the prophets that in the same way as He consciously maintains the solar system, so He will maintain Israel. See on Mt. 6:26

The language of Job 38 about God's relationship to His creation is hard to understand seeing that God Himself is all powerful and of ultimate knowledge- e. g. v. 16 says that God "walked in the search of the depth"; He came to understand the breadth of the earth (v. 18), looked inside snowflakes to see their wonder (v. 22). The Angels being in control of the natural creation no doubt "earnestly desire to look into" such things. The Angels having created the natural world, it is understandable that they should continue to have close links with it. It appears that there is an active, two-way inter-relationship between the Angels and their creation; thus the Elohim rejoice because of wine (Judges 9:13) and other things whose creation they superintended. Ps. 148 lends support to this notion. Verse 2 speaks of all the Angels praising God, and then goes on to describe the Heavens, fire, storm, hail etc. doing likewise; perhaps implying that each of those things has an Angel controlling it, which is what really gives God praise. Otherwise, how can such inanimate objects praise God?

38:22 "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail. . . ?" implies that God has gone exploring though His own creation- language more relevant to Angels than God Himself.

38:32 See on Mt. 6:26

39:3 see on 1 Sam. 16:23

39:27 See on Mt. 6:26

40:4,5- see on 6:24

When Job finally lays his hand upon his mouth (40:4), he is only doing what he had earlier told the friends to do in recognition of their folly (21:5).

The final speeches of God and Elihu brought home the point that the righteousness achieved by man was not comparable with God's righteousness (e.g. 40:7-10). We are left to draw the conclusion: that the only way for man to be just with God is through the imputation of God's righteousness to man.

40:10 array- see on 29:13,14

42:1 Answered Yahweh. It has been observed that the Covenant name of Yahweh is not used in the speeches of Job and the friends. Instead they speak of God as *El* (power) or *Shaddai* (the fruitful one). This shows how they perceived God as the awesome power of the universe, the one who granted their physical blessings in response to their obedience to Him. 'God' was like a profitable insurance policy. But *Yahweh* is fundamentally a saviour-God, one who manifests Himself in men for their salvation, and is supremely manifested in the Son. Significantly, we are told in chapter 42 that Job finally spoke to *Yahweh*; it was to Him that he said: " I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee" (42:5). He came to understand God's Name, His personality, in far greater fullness. He came to appreciate far more the extent of God's manifestation in the true friend which he looked forward to. Our sufferings and traumas have a like effect, if we respond as Job did. Note that both Jacob and Samson, in their time of spiritual maturity, also reached a higher appreciation of the names of God. Reflect likewise how Abraham told Isaac that "elohim yir'eh", the elohim would provide the sacrifice; but after the wonder of the ram being provided, he named the

place "Yhwh yir'eh" (Gen. 22:14). The experience of this foreshadowing of the cross led him to know the Yahweh Name more fully; and for this reason it can be shown that the cross was the supreme means of that Name being declared to men.

42:2- see on Mt. 19:23-26

God twice told Job that He was going to demand of him, and receive an answer (38:3; 40:7). I would suggest that God puts the words of repentance to Job, and Job then meekly repeats them: " I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me [the following words]: I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (42:4-6). This is the *ultimate* spiritual end for us all. Self-abhorrence, repentance, not just a passing niggle of conscience, but *real* repentance, in dust and ashes.

42:5- see on 19:26; Mt. 10:27

" I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee" (42:5) must be connected with 19:27, where Job reveals that his perception of the Kingdom is that *then* he would see God with his own eye. But by 42:5, he has come to the realization that what the depth of Divine understanding which he thought would only be possible in the Kingdom, was in fact possible *here and now*. This same progressive, awesome realization that *so much* is possible here and now is something which both individually and collectively we must go through.

Job finally recognized that he had only heard of God " by the hearing of the ear" (42:5) . There had been no real spiritual vision of God, no real *personal understanding*- just hearing in the ear (note how the Queen of Sheba alludes to Job's words- she had heard in the ear, but her spirit failed when she saw with her eyes). In the theological context in which Job was, the idea of seeing God for oneself was a huge paradigm jump. Centuries later, righteous Isaiah was sure he would die because he thought he had seen Yahweh (Is. 6:5). Job reached the same spiritual peak of ambition and closeness to the Almighty which Moses did when he asked to be shown God's glory, with the apparent implication that he wanted to see Yahweh's face (Ex. 33:18,20). This peak of ambition which characterized Job's maturity was partly due to the way in which God recounted His greatness before Job (e.g. ch. 38). And yet (as the above chart makes clear) an appreciation of the physical greatness of God was something which had consistently featured in Job's words. Yet he had to be taught that what he thought he knew and appreciated so well, in fact he didn't.

Earlier, his reins had been consumed within him with longing for the day when he would see God (19:26,27); and finally even in this life, he came to see God for himself (42:5). He had thought this would only be at the resurrection (19:26), seeing a full relationship with God was, he felt, impossible in this life (28:12,20); but he came to see that even in this life, with the joy of a good conscience, the principle is even now realisable. He exalted that now, his eye saw God. It wasn't all abstractly reserved for the Kingdom.

Although Job did not speak wrongly about God (42:7;2:10) and kept patiently speaking the word of God despite the mockery it brought from the friends (James 5:10,11), this does not mean that Job or all that he said was blameless. The friends are not reprimanded for speaking wrongly about Job, but about God. Thus there was probably a fair degree of truth in their accusations concerning Job. Elihu also severely rebukes him, and unlike the three friends he is not rebuked for anything in the final

analysis by God in Job 42; not to mention the accusation of 'darkening counsel without knowledge' (38:2) by the Lord Himself, backed up by four chapters of heavy reprimand of Job's reliance on human strength and wisdom. This led to Job retracting much of what he had said: " I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth...I will not answer...I will proceed no further...I uttered that I understood not...wherefore I abhor myself and repent" (40:4,5; 42:3-6). This clearly establishes that much of Job's reasoning was faulty, although what he spoke before God was correct. Job was a prophet (Job 29:4 cp. 15:8;23:12; Prov.3:32; Amos 3:7; the secret of God being with him made Job a prophet) and it is in his role as such that he is commended in James 5:10,11- i.e. for the words concerning God which he spoke. The words for which God and Elihu rebuked him were therefore about other things. Elihu accused him of speaking " without knowledge" (34:35), which Job admitted he had (42:3).

The problem of reconciling the rebuke of Job's words with the statement that he has spoken what is right about God as opposed to the friends (42:7) is the same as the frequent pronouncement that some kings of Judah walked blamelessly before God exactly as David did, when there is clear evidence in the record that this was not so. This may be because God imputes righteousness to a believer's whole life if his final acts are acceptable (cp. Ez.18:27,28). " Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" may refer to the response of the friends and Job to the rebukes of Elihu and the manifestation of God's power in the thunderstorm which must have been witnessed by the friends as well as by Job. Maybe they made some unrecorded response about God which was not right, whereas Job's supreme recognition of God's righteousness and humbling of himself was speaking that which was right about God. It has to be admitted that it is hard to understand all that Job says in the book about God as being " right" , and he is specifically rebuked by God for his words.

42:7- see on 15:8,9

The words of God and Elihu brought Job to a shuddering spiritual climax. From his heart he cried: " I am vile...I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes...I am melted " (42:6 LXX). It was concerning this matchless confession that God could say that Job had " spoken of me the thing which is right(eousness) " (42:8). God swept over the times when Job shook his fist at God, imputing righteousness to him on behalf of this confession. Thus the Spirit later speaks of the long-enduring patience of Job (James 5:11); God was able to look on his good side rather than the bad side, due to Job's confession of that bad side. To confess our sinfulness properly is to declare, by implication, righteous things about God.

42:8,10- see on James 5:10-16

We have suggested that the sufferings of Job are framed in language which connects with the sufferings of Hezekiah and also Israel, whom he epitomized, at the time of the Assyrian invasion. Hezekiah and Israel are both types of Christ (note how so many of the curses on Israel for their disobedience came upon Christ on the cross). The suffering servant of Isaiah often concerns all three of them. Thus Job's sufferings point forward, via Hezekiah and Israel, to Christ. His final vindication when he prays for his friends, lives many years, and sees his sons (42:8,16) thus connects with the prophecy of Christ making " intercession for the transgressors" who persecuted him- i.e. the Jews- and seeing his seed, prolonging his days, after his crucifixion and resurrection (Is.53:10,12- note how Is.53 is a chronological account of the events of Christ's death, resurrection and ascension). The

description of Job as the son of man and a worm uses identical language as that used about Christ on the cross in Ps. 22:6. Thus the friends for whom Job prayed are equated with the Jews who persecuted Christ, for whom Christ made intercession both on the cross and after his ascension.

Job gave his daughters an equal inheritance with his sons (Job 42:15)- something which would have been unusual in those times. Through all his sufferings, Job came to see the value and meaning of persons before God, be they male or female; he overcame the background culture, the thinking of his surrounding society, and openly showed to all the immense value he had come to place upon each and every human being, regardless of their gender.

In Ps. 1:1-3, David makes several allusions to Joshua. He speaks of how the man who meditates in God's word day and night will prosper in his ways; and he uses the very same Hebrew words as found in Josh. 1:8 in recounting God's charge to Joshua. But David's point is that the man who does these things will not "walk in the counsel of the ungodly"- he won't give in to peer pressure. The fact that Joshua was wrongly influenced by his peers in later life would indicate that he didn't keep the charge given to him.

Psalm 3 is full of reference to Samson's fight at Lehi. It was also written at a time when David was betrayed by his own people:

" Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him'" - the thoughts of the Israelites as they delivered the bound Samson to the Philistines

" But you are a shield around me" - how it must have seemed to a spectator

" To the Lord I cry aloud" - as Samson did

" I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me" - huge armies against one solitary man is a clear reference to Samson at Lehi

" Strike all my enemies the jaw bone" (Ps. 3:7 Heb.)- it could imply 'with the jaw bone'. The Hebrew for 'jaw bone' is the same as in Jud. 15:16.

7:3,4- see on 1 Sam. 20:8.

Psalm 8 Relevant to David's victory over Goliath. See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

Psalm 8 is quoted in Hebrews 2 to prove Christ's superiority over the Angels. Verses 3-5 therefore show Christ's marvel at how a human like Himself should be considered worthy to have such great Angelic attention. Such was his respect of them: "When I consider Thy Heavens, the work of Thy fingers (the Heavens were created by the Angels; the Law was given by the Angel finger of God writing on the stones), the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of Him? ('why should You think so much about mere Me?') and the son of man (Jesus) that Thou visitest (Angelic language) Him? For Thou hast made Him a little lower than the Angels. . Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands (the Hand of the Lord is Angelic language; they were used to create all things); Thou hast put all things (including the Angels) under

His feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field. . " - i. e. the things of the natural creation made and controlled by the Angels.

In the same way as the Angels are so closely associated with their charges that they are identified with them, so the Angels are described as the things in the natural world which they have created. Ps. 8:5,6 is quoted in Heb. 2:7 to prove Christ's superiority over the Angels: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands (an Angelic phrase); Thou hast put all things under his feet". "All things" often includes Angels in its context in New Testament usage. The works of God's Angel-hands in the natural creation have been put under Christ's feet, but the purpose of the quotation in Heb2 is to show that the Angels have been put under Christ's feet. Heb. 2:11 takes the point further by saying that as the Angels are identified so exactly with that they have created, so Christ was identified with His new creation, even to the extent of having an identical nature to them.

10:1 see on Prov. 15:29

In God's judgment of men it will be made apparent that it was so inappropriate for man who is made of dust to oppress his fellows (Ps. 10:18 RV). Respect of others is sorely lacking in our selfish natures. But the more we reflect upon our own insignificance, as creatures of dust, the more we will see that abuse of others in any form is inappropriate. And we don't have to wait till judgment day to perceive this- for we know the mortality and constitution of man from basic Bible teaching. This link between our mortality and humility is brought out in Paul's description of our present state as being "the body of our humiliation" (Phil. 3:21 RV). Believing we are mortal ought to be a humbling thing.

Angels do not possess ultimate power and knowledge, and therefore they need to find out our true spiritual state through the trials they bring upon us. However, God works through such weakness, as he does with us the prospective elohim, in order to bring about His very finely planned purpose. He allows Himself to be limited by the Angels, and it appears from our own experience of Him working through us that this is one of His most sublime characteristics. "The LORD is in His Holy Temple; the LORD's throne is in the Heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men" (Ps. 11:4). Apparently a Hebraism is being used here which implies God is squinting at us. To squint implies limitation of vision; God's eyes are the Angels, and so He, the great God in Heaven, allows Himself in some way to be limited by them.

Ps. 11:4,5 describes the scene in the court of Heaven: "The Lord's throne is in Heaven (mirrored by the Mighty Angel of Israel being enthroned over the Mercy Seat in the temple): His eyes (Angels) behold, His eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous (who are in His presence by their Angel), but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth".

14:2- see on Ps. 63:8.

16:5- see on Ex. 34:27

It is quite likely that Ps. 19:8,10 were written with Jonathan's experience of 1 Sam. 14 in mind: "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes... sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb". Psalm 19 may well have been written in the Bathsheba period: "Cleanse (s.w. Ps. 51:2) thou me from secret faults". So the memory of Jonathan stayed with David all his life long.

20:1- see on Ex. 25:8

20:2- see on Ps. 80:1

23- see on Gen. 28:20,21

Every reference to " the God of Jacob / Israel" is effectively saying: 'I'm the God that stuck with mixed up, struggling Jacob. And I'll stick with you too, through spiritual thick and thin, and bring you through in the end'. This is the love of God for Jacob. So close is the association between God and Jacob that there are times when the name 'Jacob' becomes a synonym for 'the God of Jacob'. Ps. 24:6 is an example: " The generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob" (cp. other examples in Is. 44:5; Jer. 10:16; 51:19). The name of Israel therefore was paralleled with the name of God- Joshua feared that the name of Israel would be cut off, "and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Josh. 2:9).

Christ's approach to Jerusalem is described in Ps. 24:10: "Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts (Angels), he is the King of glory". Thus Christ, the Lord of glory, will be especially clearly associated with the Angels as He approaches Jerusalem. He comes with all the Holy Angels with Him, with "saints", i. e. Angels, to relieve the invasion of the latter-day Sennacherib.

25:11- see on Ex. 32:32.

25:11 David, realizing he was seen by God as a representative of his people, prayed for forgiveness in that he realized that he was thereby a pattern for all the wayward people of God. "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great" (Ps. 25:11) is an undoubted reference to Moses praying for Israel's forgiveness relating to the golden calf (Ex. 32:30,31). He saw himself as both Moses in prayer and also guilty Israel. He saw Bathsheba had been his golden calf idol, mixing as it had done sexual abandon with an appearance of Yahweh worship. There was nobody to pray for him apart from himself. He saw himself as all Israel, savable only by pure grace and the sincere prayer of a mediator- even if the mediator himself was guilty.

What is so awesome is that the Hebrew word *sod*, 'council' or 'court', is something open to us as mortals. In Biblical times, Kings had their *sod*, their gathering of intimate advisors and ministers. But we, mere mortals on earth, are invited to be part of the *sod* of God Almighty, having His purpose and plans revealed to us (Ps. 25:14; Job 29:4). But *sod* members weren't passive listeners; they gave their advice and requests, and the King factored that into His decision making. This is a picture of the power of prayer from those who have understood the way and essence of the King of Heaven.

26:1 What David learnt from the Bathsheba failure is in essence what we all have to learn. Psalm 26 was surely written before he sinned with her. He speaks of how he had walked in integrity before God "without wavering" (Ps. 26:1 RV), and how his foot did not slip (Ps. 26:12). What else does this evidently pre-Bathsheba Psalm indicate about David's attitude, and what changed after Bathsheba? He speaks in Ps. 26:5 of how he refuses to sit at table with sinners. Yet the Lord rejoiced to do just this. He contrasts his righteousness with the sinfulness of the wicked (Ps. 26:10,11)- a far cry from Paul's insistence in Romans that we have sinned just as much as the world has, in the sense that we desperately need salvation by grace. When David asks for forgiveness in Ps. 26:11 ("redeem me, and be merciful unto me"), he therefore was apparently asking for mercy in an almost technical way, perhaps seeing the only mercy he required as a resurrection from the dead. All these attitudes

changed radically after his Bathsheba experience. He could look back and reflect how "As for me, I said in my prosperity, I shall never be moved" (Ps. 30:6), perhaps looking back to Ps. 26:10, where he had felt confident his foot had never been moved. And he speaks of how he only stands strong because of God's gracious favour (Ps. 30:7). God works through sin and failure- to bring us to know His grace. We follow the same learning curve as David, if we are truly God's man or woman.

30:6- see on Ps. 26:1.

David's family appear to have later disowned him during Saul's persecution (Ps. 31:11), fleeing from him, as the Lord's friends also did (Ps. 31:11 = Mt. 26:56). See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

"I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes" (Angels, Ps. 31:22) could be a prophecy of the Lord Jesus' fear of losing the Angelic presence whilst He was on the cross- hence Mt. 27:46

32:1,2 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven" (Ps. 32:1), David wrote, after experiencing God's mercy in the matter of Bathsheba. But Paul sees this verse as David describing " the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:6). Each of us are in need of a like justification; therefore we find ourselves in David's position. The Spirit changes Ps. 32:1 (" Blessed is *he* whose transgression is forgiven") to " Blessed are *they* " (Rom. 4:7) to make the same point.

32:2- see on 2 Sam. 19:20.

32:2 "Blessed is the man (e.g. David, or any sinner- David is our example) unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Ps. 32:2) is alluded to in 2 Cor. 5:19: " God was in Christ...not imputing (the world's) trespasses unto them". See on 1 Pet. 2:22; Rev. 14:5.

32:6 - see on 2 Cor. 6:2; 7:7-11.

32:6 Note how he describes those who would sin as grievously as he had done, as Godly", even in the moments *before* their prayer of repentance. In those moments of contrition immediately prior to uttering a prayer of penitence, we reach pinnacles of Godliness.

32:6 As David "found" God through experiencing His forgiveness, so can " every one that is Godly" today. It is quite possible that "seek and ye shall find" (Mt. 7:7) was uttered by the Lord with his mind on Ps. 32:6 and David's experience. After all, we cannot expect this to be a blank cheque offer, that whatever we seek for we must receive. But if these words are an allusion to David's seeking and finding forgiveness in Ps. 32:6, then the promise is more realistic. If we seek for forgiveness and a living relationship with God, then we have this unconditional promise that we *will* find this. Yet in a sense, the time when we will ultimately find God will be at the judgment: we will " find mercy of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. 1:18), so that "ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:14). We will find God, as He will find us, in that great moment of consummation; " for then shall (we) know (God), even as also (we) are known" by Him (1 Cor. 13:12;). Then we will "be *found* in him...that I may (then) *know* him" (Phil. 3:9,10). Yet David says that after forgiveness, we can find and know God. It is as if whenever we sin, we in a sense face our judgment seat. And the knowledge and 'finding' of God which we will then enjoy should be prefigured in our present

experience of forgiveness. Should we not therefore pray for forgiveness with the intensity with which we would at the judgment, if we were then offered the chance to do so?

32:7 David came to know the marvel of this. And David is our example. His response was to eagerly desire to spread the knowledge of God which he acquired through his experience of God's forgiveness. "I will instruct thee and teach thee" he exalts in Ps.32:8. He knew that as God "shalt *compass me* about with songs of deliverance" on forgiveness (Ps.32:7), so "he (anyone) that trusteth in the Lord (as David did), mercy shall *compass him* about" (Ps.32:10). "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways" (Ps.51:13) is another example. Likewise, Peter (Lk.5:8-10), Isaiah (Is.6:5-9) and Paul (Eph.3:8) all received preaching commissions straight after their experience of forgiveness. Our knowledge of God through receiving it should be a powerful stimulus to our personal witnessing. There is every reason why *some* of our witnessing should include personal testimony of what the Lord has done for us.

32:11- see on Ps. 51:4

32:31- see on 35:15

Ps. 34:3 promises that the Angel of the Lord will encamp /Mahanaim around *all* His servants, just as the Angel did at Mahanaim for Jacob. Jacob's struggle at [or with] Penuel strikes a chord with each of us. Frank Lake has pointed out that each person struggles to find peace in their relationships with others and also with their God- whether or not they are conscious of those struggles. Jacob's experience is clearly set up as representative of our own.

Ps. 34 has several allusions to Jacob (vv. 6,7,13). "The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (v.7) is alluding to the Angel with fearful Jacob on the night of westling, and delivering him from Esau. And yet the Angel set out to fight and slay Jacob, after the pattern of Esau (33:10). Jacob feared because of his sins and because of the relentless approach of his brother. Yet this is turned round to mean that Jacob's fear was actually fear of God, and on account of this feat, the Angel delivered Jacob. Jacob was partly afraid of God and his own sins, but (it seems) more significantly, he simply feared Esau physically. And yet in Ps. 34:7, God chose that more positive aspect of Jacob and memorialized it there as an example to others.

34:4 In several of his Psalms, David shows an awareness that he represents all God's people, that David was our example. "The righteous cried, and the Lord heard", he could write, with easy reference to his crying to God when with Abimelech [see Psalm title]; but he goes straight on to say that God delivers *all* the righteous out of all their troubles (Ps. 34:4,6,17 RV).

34:7 The Angels being "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" and the fact that "the Angel of the LORD encampeth around" those who fear God indicates that we do have at least one Angel in control of our lives personally. "Encampeth" means more 'to settle down'- the Angel does not rush into our lives at our frantic behest when we are in a sudden crisis, but has settled down around us for a long time in preparing that trial.

34:7- see on Ex. 33:3

David several times speaks of the need to fear God and 'depart from evil', and the blessedness of the man who does so (Ps. 34:14; 37:27); and Solomon repeats his father repeatedly on this point (Prov. 3:7; 4:27; 13:19; 14:16; 16:6,17). Yet they are surely alluding to Job, who feared God and "eschewed" [s.w. 'depart from'] evil (Job 1:1). Without doubt, these allusions indicate that they saw Job as symbolic of all the righteous. And this is no mere piece of painless Bible exposition; Job in all his turmoil really is the pattern for each one of us, the path through which we each must pass.

35:5,6- see on Ex. 12:23

The idea of threshing is often associated with the judgement; the unworthy will be "as chaff before the wind: and let the Angel of the Lord chase them. . let the Angel of the Lord persecute them" (Ps. 35:5,6). The Angels are made spirit (the same word Hebrew word as 'winds') and are being likened to the wind in this threshing process, driving the unworthy away, as Adam, typifying the rejected, was chased out of Eden by the Angels. "As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more; but the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Prov. 10:25) appears the basis of the parable of the house on the rock, making the whirlwind correspond to the second coming in judgement. "The whirlwind" is Angel cherubim language; as if it is by that means that the wicked will be destroyed. Note that "the wicked" and "the fool" in Proverbs often refer to those who are responsible.

35:14 There is one verse which to me is a cameo of the extent of the victory which David won against the mind of the flesh, against our massive tendency to repay sin with sin, bitterness with bitterness, anger with anger. If we take nothing else away from this, please focus your mind on this, and keep the memory: In Ps. 35:14 David protests his love for the one who was persecuting him (v.1-4 etc.): " (When he was sick...I humbled my soul with fasting)...I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed myself heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother " . Perhaps David is reflecting here upon his attitude to Saul's death. " As one that mourneth for his mother " . Just think of it. " As one that mourneth for his mother " . This is surely one of the most powerful figures that could be employed. Picture a young man of say 24, in a dark blue suit, kneeling down at the graveside of his mother, surrounded by friends and relatives, bowing down heavily in his grief. Or picture a man of 34, 44, 54, hair greying and receding now, bowing himself down heavily. Or even 64, 74, alone in his grief, bowing down heavily to the green turf, muttering words about mum. Perhaps some of us haven't yet experienced this; many have. If you haven't, just imagine it. Surely it brings a lump to your throat. Now it was with this intensity of grief that David mourned the death or sickness of his persecutor. This is a wondrous reflection of his devotion, his true love, his triumph over bitterness and anger, over all the human actions that had been directed against him. The heavy bowing down of the Lord Jesus as he wept over Jerusalem, the city that hated and rejected him, whose leaders slew him, whose people screamed for his blood. David wept for Saul as if he was his friend or brother. Who was David's friend and brother? Surely Jonathan his brother-in-law. But he wept for Saul, David says, as he wept for Jonathan. This is testified to historically by David's lament of 2 Sam. 1. And still David sought out the house of Saul, "that I may shew the kindness of God" unto them (2 Sam. 9:3). It was the experience of Divine kindness that motivated David. As he hoped for fellowship at the King's table in the future, so David delighted in inviting his former enemies to partake of his table, now *he* was king (2 Sam. 9:7,11,13). And if we hope to share the Lord's table in the Kingdom, we must share it with our weaker brethren now. You know I see in all this such a triumph for David, that a man should reflect the love of God to such an extent, to love in the face of such hatred, to not just love those who loved him.

Some reverence God's physical power and majesty rather than His moral majesty. David got the balance right when he reflected: " Thy righteousness is like the great mountains" (Ps. 36:6). He saw God's moral strength reflected in the massive physicality of God's creation. Job had to be taught this lesson.

Ps. 38:1 is a Bathsheba Psalm: "Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me". But it is quoted in Heb. 12:5,6 about *all* of God's children, who have to go through David's basic experience in order to become the accepted sons of God. We *do* all have to be rebuked and chastened, even if like children, like David, we so fear it.

38:13 - see on Jud. 16:13

38:13 As a deaf man- David learnt the secret of seeing the positive in our weak brethren, and he didn't let all that was wrong with Saul interfere with this. He describes himself as responding to criticism like this: "I as a deaf man, heard not" (Ps. 38:13). Yet he was alluding to how Saul, when likewise criticized by "sons of belial", "was as though he had been deaf" to their words (1 Sam. 10:27 RVmg.). He saw the good in Saul, he remembered that one good example he showed- and it empowered him to follow it. This is all the more remarkable, in that it seems God would have given Saul into David's hand when "a deep sleep from the Lord" fell upon Saul at the very time David intended to kill him (1 Sam. 26:12). Saul himself realized that the Lord had delivered him into David's hand to kill him (1 Sam. 24:18). God thus confirmed David in his intentions- and yet at the last minute, it seems, David chose an even higher level; of love and deep respect for this spiritually sick man.

38:14 - see on 51:4

38:17 "In mine adversity (Heb. *tseia*, limping) they rejoiced" (Ps. 35:15), " I am ready to halt (*tseia*) and my sorrow (repentance) is continually before me" (Ps. 38:17) uses a word which occurs elsewhere mainly in the context of Jacob limping after the night of wrestling (Gen. 32:31). This is one of many of David's allusions to Jacob.

38:17 Many of the Psalms understood by the Jews as relevant to the Nazi holocaust are Bathsheba Psalms. "Out of the depths" they cried like David; and at the entrance to Bergen-Belsen it stands written: "My sorrow is continually before me" (Ps. 38:17), in recognition of having received punishment for sin [note how these kind of plaques contain no trace of hatred or calling for Divine retribution upon the persecutors]. See on 2 Cor. 7:7-11.

41:9- see on Jud. 16:13

Psalm 42 has many echoes of the cross, although primarily it refers to David's longing for the tabernacle whilst exiled by Absalom. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the God of the living ones (the Angel in the tabernacle); when shall I come and appear before God (the Angel)?"(v. 2). He reflects how in the past "I went with them to the house of God" (v. 4)- i. e. Bethel, with all its Angelic associations. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" (v. 5)- the same in the Septuagint as Matt. 26:38 "Now is my soul troubled". Jesus rallies Himself: "Hope thou in God (His Angel); for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance"- fulfilled by the Angel appearing to Jesus in Gethsemane (transferring some of the glory of His countenance to Jesus as He did to Moses, so that Christ's arresters initially fell down when they saw Him?). "O my God. . . I will say unto God my rock ("the

rock" is an angelic phrase- Gen. 49:24; Dt. 32:4,18), Why hast Thou forgotten Me?" (v. 6,9). Strong defines 'forgotten' as "to be oblivious of from want of memory or attention"- surely Jesus would not accuse His Father of this? It may therefore have more relevance to His feelings concerning the Angels.

42:8 waters- see on Rev. 16:5.

44:6 sword and bow- see on 2 Sam. 1:22.

Separation *from* the world *unto* the things of God is brought out in the way Ps. 45:10,16 alludes to the Mosaic laws about a Gentile woman forgetting her father's house. Indeed the Psalm appears to have relevance to Solomon's marriage to a Gentile [and note the allusions to Joseph's marriage to a Gentile]: "Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house [this is the 'separation from' the world]...instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, which thou mayest make princes in all the earth [land- of Israel]". The emotional pain of separation from her father's world would be offset by her bringing forth Godly children within the hope of Israel. The whole process of separating from and yet also separating *unto* seems to me to create a kind of synergy from the whole dialectic. It's by separating *from* the world that we go back into this world in service and witness and caring concern. And if we don't find ourselves 'separated *unto*' those things- have we actually separated *from* this world in the way God intends?

46:2- see on Rev. 8:8

51:1- see on Acts 3:19.

Ps. 51:1,9 "Have mercy upon me. . according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions". Mercies and truth are often references to the promises to Abraham- to bless his seed with forgiveness of sins (Acts 3:25,26). The Angels made these promises, and were therefore the ones to blot out the sins in fulfilment of them. "Hide Thy face (presence- an Angelic title) from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities".

51:3,4 David's confession of sin in Ps. 51:3,4 is packed with Job allusions; as if Job's physical trials brought about the same effect as David's full recognition of his sin. Such recognition ought to be easily possible for each of us, regardless of our 'physical' experiences in life.

51:4 He recognized that God works through our sinfulness- he is effectively saying 'I sinned so that You might be justified...'. These words are quoted in Rom. 3:4,5 in the context of Paul's exultation that " *our* unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God" - in just the same way as David's did! Because God displays His righteousness every time He justifies a repentant sinner, He is in a sense making Himself yet more righteous. We must see things from God's perspective, from the standpoint of giving glory to God's righteous attributes. If we do this, then we can see through the ugliness of sin, and come to terms with our transgressions the more effectively. And Paul quotes David's sin with Bathsheba as our supreme example in this. We along with all the righteous ought to "shout for joy" that David really was forgiven (Ps. 32:11)- for there is such hope for us now. David is our example. And yet the intensity of David's repentance must be ours. He hung his head as one in whose mouth there were no more arguments, hoping only in the Lord's grace (Ps. 38:14 RVmg.).

Notice too how Ps. 51:1 "Have mercy on me, O God..." is quoted by the publican in Lk. 18:13. He felt that David's prayer and situation was to be his. And he is held up as the example for each of us.

51:4 David was very conscious that his sin had been "in thy (God's) sight" (Ps.51:4). The psalms of repentance have several examples of him talking like this. It may be to this Davidic theme that the parable of the prodigal son (i.e. each of us) refers: "I have sinned...in thy sight" (Lk. 15:18,21). It is significant that our Lord's supreme parable of repentance refers back to that of David. It has been observed that there are many connections between the Psalms related to the Bathsheba incident, and those which are especially prophetic of Christ's crucifixion. David's intense suffering on account of sin was therefore prophetic of our Lord's mental and physical suffering for the same reason. It is because of this link that Christ is able to sympathize with the traumas of spiritual guilt which accompany our repentance. It is truly breathtaking to discern how God works through our sins, to the extent that through the struggle for repentance which they engender, they can associate us with the sufferings of His sinless Son.

51:17 David/Bathsheba language is used to describe Israel's spiritually fallen state (e.g. Ps.38:7=Is.1:6; Ps.51:7=Is.1:18; Ps.65:2=Is.40:15). David recognized this in Ps. 51:17, where he likens his own state to that of Zion, which also needed to be revived by God's mercy. As David's sin is likened to the killing of a lamb (2 Sam. 12:4), so the Jews killed Jesus. The troubles which therefore came upon his kingdom have certain similarities with the events of AD67-70. They were also repeated in the Nazi Holocaust, and will yet be. Israel are yet to fully repent after the pattern of David.

Psalms 57:3 "He shall send from Heaven, and save me". The word "send" is normally translated 'to send away, to let depart', implying physical movement away. This implies Angels are physically sent over space to answer prayer. The same word occurs in other verses where this same idea stands up well- e. g. Ps. 144:7 "Send Thine hand (an Angel) from Heaven. . ." It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

63:8 David responded to their seeking of him by seeking God more. He uses the language of the hunt and chase to describe how he was drawing closer to God: "My soul followeth hard after thee" (Ps. 63:8; Ps. 63 is a wilderness psalm, see title). "Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul...let all those that seek thee rejoice" (Ps. 40:14,16). In this sense, David felt he wasn't fleeing *from* his enemies as much as fleeing *to* God: "Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies (from whom he was running): I flee unto thee to hide me" (Ps. 143:9). This fleeing *to* God didn't mean that David and Jesus didn't respond or retaliate verbally; both of them, especially the Lord Jesus, did. They both pleaded their innocence, and accused their enemies of being unfair and hypocritical. Yet this must have been done from a genuine motive of love; as David loved Saul, as the thought of Saul's death must have torn at his heart, so the Lord Jesus loved Israel, weeping over Jerusalem, wishing to himself like a child for the impossible: that they would know him as their Saviour. Both David and Jesus had a real sense of direction, they could see that their mental, emotional and physical sufferings were leading them towards an altogether higher relationship with the Father. They took those sufferings as an almost welcome push towards the Father. They had a sure sense of spiritual direction in all their afflictions; this accounts for the human loneliness which they both felt. David

felt that no one else understood (Ps. 14:2, a wilderness psalm) or was really seeking towards God as he was doing (Ps. 27:4,8). The Hebrew for " understand" here is that translated " wise" concerning David in 1 Sam. 18.

When men speak hard words against us, the situation on earth is somehow mirrored in the court of Heaven- Ps. 64:3,7 speak of how *men* "aim their arrows, even bitter words"; and God responds by shooting arrows from His Heavenly control room.

There is the implication that a great number of Angels- perhaps the guardian Angels of each of the Israelites- were with them too: "great was the company of those that published it. . . even thousands of Angels" (Ps. 68:11), i. e. the word concerning Israel leaving Egypt and entering the promised land.

Psalms 68:11 shows how the Angels receive Words from God, which they obey by putting into practice (cp. Ps. 103:20,21 "ye ministers of His. . . hearkening unto the voice of His word"); but they sometimes, as we have seen, cause men to be inspired by those words. Ps. 68 comments on the Exodus from Egypt. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company (the 'host'- a word often used about the Angels) of them that published it". This "great company" is defined in v. 17 as "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels". See on 2 Sam. 23:1-3

69:1,2-see on Job 19:12-14

69:8-see on Job 19:12-14

69:12-see on Job 19:12-14

As Christ prayed on the cross, so we should arm ourselves with the same attitude of mind in prayer (cp. 1 Pet.4:1). In the context of Ps. 69:13, these are the thoughts of Christ on the cross: " My prayer is unto thee, O Lord, in an acceptable time...in the truth of Thy salvation" . These words are alluded to in 2 Cor.6:2, where *we* are told to draw near to God (and encourage others to do so), because now is the accepted time and the day of *our* salvation.

69:20-see on Job 19:12-14

72:17- see on Gen. 18:18

77:17 waters- see on Rev. 16:5.

As Samson was characterized by his love of that riddle (the word occurs nine times in Jud. 14:12-19, and 15:16 Heb. is also some kind of riddle), so David uses the same word to describe how he chose to put forth a riddle (Ps. 78:2).

78:23-see on Dt. 8:2,3

The Angels never affect our freewill, but nevertheless provide the necessary arrangement of circumstances to encourage us to do God's will, and affecting the lives of unbelievers to this end too. In order for unbelievers to present the necessary trials to us in order to bring this about, the Angels harden the hearts of these people. Thus in Psalm 78 :49 we read of the plagues on Egypt being brought by the "Angels of evil", including the slaying of the firstborn. These plagues were due to Pharaoh's heart being hardened by God (Ex. 4:21)- i. e. by the Angels of evil. Angels affect human hearts- for good and bad, operationalizing the upward or downward spirals into which human beings must inevitably enter.

1 Cor. 10:10 speaks of an Angel called "the destroyer" who brought about Israel's punishments in the wilderness. And yet Ps. 78:49 speaks of these as being executed by "A band of Angels of evil" (RVmg.). Likewise Rev. 9:14 has one Angel controlling others, perhaps as our guardian Angel has control over many others to effect his plans for us. The one Angel had control over others, Angels specifically used to bring evil upon those whom God rejects. It may be they will be used again in the judgment of the last day. Or it could be that 'Angels' in Ps. 78:49 is an intensive plural, and the AV reading is correct: "by sending evil angels...". The one great Angel of evil is "the destroyer" of 1 Cor. 10:10. This could imply that some of the references to a "Satan" who brings disaster, as in Job, refer to one specific Angel who does these things, or co-ordinates them.

78:49 sent- see on Ex. 9:14

Psalm 78:60 says that because of their sins, "He (i. e. the Angel) forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among

men". This implies that the Angel was physically present in the tabernacle, and that God's displeasure was shown by this Angel literally being withdrawn. A number of other references support this idea of an Angel physically being present in the tabernacle / temple, and therefore being the source of the glory which sometimes shone forth; 1 Chron. 15 and Ps. 68 describe the entering of the ark into Jerusalem in terms of the Angelic march through the wilderness at the Exodus, thus connecting the Ark with the Angels. See on 1 Chron. 13:6; Ex. 25:8; 33:3; Lev. 4:17; Num. 14:42; Ecc. 5:1-7; 2 Chron. 31:2; Is. 8:18; Mic. 1:3; Dan. 8:11; Ez. 8:4; Mt. 23:21

Ps. 78:67 comments that God did not choose Ephraim- whereas Jacob did (Gen. 48:14). The implication could well be that even at the end of his life, Jacob's choice of Ephraim over Manasseh reflected some sort of weakness, a being out of step with God. This attitude that *he* could bring about the fulfillment of God's promises through his own efforts was the outcome of Jacob's self-righteousness.

Perhaps the idea of our prayers going first to an Angel is hinted at in Psalm 80:1 "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel (the language of Is. 63:11 regarding the guardian Angel of Israel in the wilderness), thou that leadest Joseph like a flock (the Angel led Israel through the wilderness); Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. . ". It would seem that the Angel "went up in the midst of them" as Moses had successfully pleaded for by physically dwelling between the Cherubim whilst they were encamped, occasionally shining out with the shekinah glory either in pleasure or anger at the people's behaviour during the journey. In this Psalm we see a prayer addressed to this Angel. The word "send" is sometimes used with regard to God physically sending forth an Angel in answer to prayer. "The LORD send thee help from the sanctuary (Most Holy)" (Ps. 20:2) indicates that the Angel was physically there, and that God would send out His help through that Angel. There are other allusions to the Angel in Ps. 80, but v. 4 is interesting in the prayer context: "O Lord God of Hosts (Angels), how long wilt Thou smoke against the prayer of this people?". Incense represents prayer, but it seems that if prayer is insincere the Angels as it were fill the sanctuary with smoke to stop the incense getting through to Jesus. This is perhaps the situation in Rev. 15:8, where the temple was filled with smoke from "the glory of God and His power" (the Angels? cp. 2 Thess. 1:8,9), so that "no man"- i. e. no man's prayer?- could enter until the Angels had fully punished the world. See on Is. 6:7; Ex. 25:8

Angel is asked to give special attention to "the branch that Thou madest strong for Thyself. . let Thy hand (an Angelic phrase) be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for Thyself" (Ps. 80:15,17). Christ is the branch (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5), and in any case both the branch and the "Son of man" are made strong for the Angel's own purpose ("for thyself"). This Angelic making strong is surely alluded to when the Angel "strengthened Him" in the garden (Luke 22:43). This chimes in with the popular idea that Angelic presence was withdrawn from Jesus on the cross- hence His cry primarily to the Angel "My God (strength), my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt. 27:46); perhaps fulfilling the crucifixion prophecy of Ps. 31:22 "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes (Angels): nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of My supplications when I cried unto Thee".

This hand of God made a specific branch "strong for Thyself". This branch was Jesus (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8;6:12). The word for 'strong' is not the normal Hebrew word translated this way. It implies more to be alert, strong minded, and is the same word translated "good courage" used so

often by the Angel in assuring Joshua of His support of him. We will see how the Angelic encouragement of Joshua was also repeated to Joshua-Jesus (their names being identical in itself makes Joshua a detailed type of Christ). Thus the strengthening of Joshua foreshadows that of Christ, both of His mind and courage, and also ultimately in His resurrection. It was this kind of mental strength that the Angel gave to Jesus in Gethsemane. The same word is used in Ps. 89:21 concerning the seed of David (the whole Psalm is a commentary on the Davidic promise): "with whom My hand (Angel) shall be established: Mine arm (Angel) also shall strengthen Him". The ultimate strengthening of Christ was in his resurrection, and the Angels being present at the tomb suggests they were responsible for this too. The point has been made that Peter's experience in prison was similar to our Lord's; a Herod willing to please the Jews by persecuting Christians, Passover time, sleeping between two soldiers (cp. two thieves), being smitten on the side, the death of James cp. John the baptist etc. In this parallel Peter being led out of the prison by the Angel would correspond to Christ being resurrected by the Angel.

Angels In Psalm 81

It may be that Angels use language and writing skills (e. g. for writing in the book of life? how about "the language of Angels" in 1 Cor. 13:1?), and it appears that they have limitations in these too- Psalm 81 describes the work of the Angel in bringing Israel out of Egypt:

v. 1 "God of Jacob"- an Angelic term; Jacob conceived of his God in terms of an Angel- Gen. 48:15,16

v. 5 "He went out through the land of Egypt"-the Angel of the Lord did this to kill the firstborn

v. 4,5 "He ordained a Law and a statute"- the Angels ministered the Law of Moses, as stressed in Hebrews 1 and 2

v. 6 "I removed his (Israel's) shoulder from the burden"- the Angel led them out of bondage

v. 7 "I proved thee (their faith) at the waters of Meribah"; as we will see, proving is the work of Angels rather than of God Himself, who has full knowledge of all things and doesn't need to "prove" anyone.

We then come to the amazing statement "I heard a language that I understood not" (v. 5)- as if the Angel being talked about didn't understand Egyptian? Or is this because the Angel was so strongly identified with His people that what was true of them became true of Him?

v. 10 "I. . brought thee out of the land of Egypt"- the Angel in the pillar of cloud did this.

81:5 went forth- See on Is. 37:36

81:6- see on Ex. 34:27

81:13 see on 1 Kings 22:22

Ps. 81:16 says that if Israel were obedient, they would have been fed with honey as well as Manna- whilst Dt. 32:13 says they did have honey on their journey. What they could have had and what they were given in prospect is spoken of as if it was reality due to the nature of how Angels work. Or it could be that God in His grace did give them some honey, even though they didn't fulfill the requirement- for God is so gracious.

Ps. 81 has clear Angelic allusions; the Angel laments "Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and . . . walked in My ways! I would soon have subdued their enemies. . . He should have fed them with the finest of the wheat, and with honey of the rock should I have satisfied thee" (v. 13-16). Thus our Angel will act more quickly for us according to our obedience, and may have physical and spiritual blessings prepared for us which we are yet to realize due to our lack of wholly following the Angel into our inheritance. The Angel planned to give Israel honey as well as water out of the rock on their journey- the water representing Christ and the Spiritual blessings from Him (1 Cor. 10:4; John 7:38,39); yet even richer blessings (honey from the rock) were possible; and are possible for us in our wilderness lives. Similarly the "bread from Heaven" which represents the Word (so Jesus interpreted it throughout John 6) would not have been stodgy manna ,but "the finest of the wheat"

82:1 "Elohim has taken his place in the divine council

In the midst of the elohim he holds judgment" (Ps. 82:1)- a reference to the court of Heaven.

83:5-8 The nations are listed here according to their geographical position, starting in the East and then passing around clockwise to the south and up to the north east. The idea is that all the nations surrounding Israel are involved in this confederacy- which is exactly the situation Israel is currently in.

83:13 The idea of a whirlwind sweeping away Israel's Arab enemies is the picture of Daniel 2, where the image is broken and swept away at the return of Christ. The image therefore seems to speak of a latter day domination of Israel by her Arab enemies.

Did David's faith in the resurrection collapse in Ps. 88:10? Job's likewise.

"Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Yahweh,
Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones
For who in the skies can be compared to Yahweh?
Who among the sons of God is like Yahweh,
A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones
Great and awesome above all that are around him?" (Ps. 89: 5-7) - a reference to the court of Heaven.

The reverence and humility for God's will which the Angels exhibit whilst not always fully understanding it is a great exhortation for us. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Ps. 89:7) in the Heavenly council.

Angels being active in our lives represent by that token God's fundamental faithfulness to us- "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints (Angels) and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him (the Angels round about the Heavenly throne). O Lord God of Hosts (Angels), who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? Or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee?" (Ps. 89:7,8). The Angels around the throne are here equated with God's faithfulness. It is likely that other occurrences of this word may also have an Angelic context.

90:2 Brought forth... formed [Heb. 'give birth to']- the world was formed out of God. The idea of *creatio ex nihilo* isn't Biblical. This world is made *out of* God and is therefore not separate from Him. Man is not alone; we aren't cut adrift from our creator. God is so closely with us. He isn't far from every one of us. The fact God is in Heaven and we on earth doesn't mean He is far from us. In human

terms, spatiality means apartness; but not for God, who fills Heaven and earth. His being in space and time breaks in to our experience of space and time. Note too that God is perfect / complete in and of Himself; He didn't "need" us. But He created us and then speaks as if He does in some sense "need" us. The point is, creation was an act of grace. All complaints at the seeming injustice and suffering of creation miss this point. Note too that "brought forth" implies God as a mother / female. His nature is such that He is able to identify with both male and female.

Ps. 90:3 implies that each person dies as a result of a conscious, specific command from God; not just because of natural processes. See on Mt. 6:26.

90:3 Sayest- As if God speaks Gen. 3:19 to each person who dies. In this sense the Bible is a living word; the Red Sea and other salvations of God are as it were performed in an ongoing sense to us each one today. Likewise Abel "is yet spoken of" (Heb. 11:4 AVmg.). The passage in the scrolls that said "I am the God of Abraham" was "spoken unto *you* by God" , Jesus told first century Israel (Mt. 22:31).

God was willing to hearken to Moses as he prayed so, so earnestly, He was willing to change His expressed purpose in respect to destroying Israel (perhaps Ps. 90 is the transcript of this prayer- v.3 in Hebrew asks God not to destroy the children of men, and to repent concerning His servants in vv. 13-17. In Dt. 16:15 Moses sounds as if Ps. 90:17 has been answered).

90:4 As a watch in the night- Was Moses right to imply that God forgets about His creatures, just as we sleep through the night watch unaware of its passing? Ps. 90 is Moses' prayer asking for God's judgment against Israel and himself in the wilderness to be changed. He had reasoned with God and changed His earlier decision to destroy Israel and make of Moses a great nation. But this prayer of Moses went unanswered- "speak no more unto me of this matter" (Dt. 3:26). However, this Psalm is an example of how intimate a man can become with God. Moses pleads that man only lives 70 years, maybe 80- so, cut us some slack, God, and reverse our judgment (90:10). He waxes very poetic and eloquent about our humanity. But fails to persuade God. And he also rather oddly seems to ignore the fact that he was blessed with 120 years of life with his youthful vigour unabated. He describes our return to dust as being a result of God's wrath and anger (90:3,7)- suggesting some resentment at God's judgment of man in Gen. 3, just as Moses resented how God had judged him and Israel. He argues that they had already suffered quite enough evil in Egypt (90:15) and asks if God can't give that generation just a little joy in life. 90:4 could be seen as Moses arguing 'You've got eternity; we only have a delicate, fragile, grief-filled 70 years. So please, relent on your idea of filling all our human lives with grief by not letting us into the promised land'. 90:8 sounds like Moses objected to God scrutinizing our "secret sins", and 90:11 speaks as if God's anger and wrath were just too much. He clearly had a problem accepting the justice of God's punishment against sin; hence this prayer wasn't answered. But it's the intimacy with God, that a man feels he can speak like this to God, which is the exhortation.

90:6 Is interpreted in James 1:11 so positively. If we are indeed so fleeting and weak, then don't worry about getting rich. Don't trust in man nor in wealth. Because man is so weak. Likewise in 90:12- numbering our days, realizing their brevity, will help us get a heart of wisdom.

It is a fundamental, if neglected, doctrine that Christ was our representative. This really ought to be a source of comfort to us, as we sense the involvement of the Son of God in our lives, one who can

truly empathise (rather than just sympathise) with our spiritual struggle. This is so clearly taught by the typology of Moses as a type of Christ. Although he spoke to God as a friend, with an open-faced relationship, he still took upon himself the sin of Israel, he felt as condemned as they felt (Ex. 34:9 cp. 33:11); when he pleaded for God's sentence on him to be lifted, he pleaded for the same sentence on Israel to be lifted too (Ps. 90:8).

In Psalm 90 Moses pleads for his rejection and that of his people to be reversed. He says that the reason for their rejection was God setting their "secret sins" in the light of His countenance (Ps. 90:8). He felt his rejection was due to his secret sins- not the one painfully public failure. The Hebrew for "secret" means 'that behind the veil'; it is from the same root as the Hebrew for 'young girl', i.e. a veiled one. He felt the sins he had committed behind the veil had been exposed in the light of the Angel's face. Remember that Moses *always* appeared to Israel with a veil (Ex. 34:33-35; 2 Cor. 3:16-18 RV), only removing it when he spoke face to face with the Angel, radiating the light of God's glory to him. It seems Moses is alluding to this in Ps. 90:8; he felt that he had many secret sins, hidden to Israel, but completely open to the Angel when he met with him. Likewise Israel were rejected because of the sins of their *heart* rather than their grosser failures (Acts 7:39; and see the reason for their condemnation given in many other passages). "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 90:8) is not Moses reproaching God; rather is it him soberly recognising why they were barred from the land. Notice "*our* iniquities... *our* sins" - Moses was completely at one with condemned Israel, he knew exactly how they felt- just as the Lord Jesus with us.

90:8 Secret sins- Moses perceived that Israel [and his?] rejection from the land wasn't just due to one incident, but because of their secret sins being viewed by God. Moses himself had been often in the light of God's countenance. David in his penitential Psalms concerning Bathsheba and Uriah likewise at times perceives that there were many other sins involved than "just" adultery and murder.

90:9- see on Dt. 34:5,6

90:9 Tale that is told- A reference to the tradition of giving a summary of the deceased's life at their funeral? Is. 53:8 laments that this wasn't done at the death of Messiah. The idea perhaps is that as it takes a mere 20 minutes to summarize a person's life, so in the context of infinity, that is indeed how brief it is.

90:11 According to- out of our own mouths / perceptions of God we will be judged. God's mercy is upon us according as we trust in Him. And His wrath according as we fear it, Moses appears to be saying.

90:12 Number our days- The condemned generation knew that within 40 years they would be dead. And so they could number their days.

90:12 Unto wisdom- "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Dt. 32:29).

Ps. 90:13 "Let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. . . Return, O Lord. . . O satisfy us early with Thy mercy. . . for we are consumed by Thine anger". This 'prayer of Moses' (title) is lamenting how Israel

were being destroyed by the Angel as they wandered in the forty year period of punishment. It may even be that the Angel left Israel in a sense (hence "Return O Lord") although still leading them. Thus there are different degrees of the Angelic presence- as at the restoration the Angel did in a limited sense return to the temple. Yet Moses clearly believed that this period of decreed punishment could be shortened ("satisfy us early with Thy mercy") by the Angel repenting. Previously his prayers had succeeded in making the Angel repent of the evil that He had planned to do to Israel, and Moses evidently hoped the Angel would again repent. Why exactly didn't He? Ps. 91 follows on from Ps. 90, and is also clearly Angelic.

90:13 Return- s.w. Ex. 32:12 "Turn from your fierce wrath". Ps. 90:11 has just spoken of God's fierce wrath. Moses' hope was always that God would "repent" if He perceived the depth of Israel's suffering (Dt. 32:36 "The Lord will repent Himself for His servants when He sees that their power is gone"). "Return" may also be a request for God's presence to return again to the tabernacle rather than being outside it.

90:13-15 See on Ex. 34:9

90:14 Early- i.e. 'reduce the time period of judgment upon us, and let us enter the land'. Or [Heb.], Moses may be asking for an answer "in the morning".

Moses desired that God's glory would "appear...upon / unto" the children of God's servants (Ps. 90:16). He wanted all God's children to have the same experience of glory appearing to them as he had had. And according to 2 Cor. 3:18, this desire is fulfilled every time a man turns to the Lord Jesus, and like Moses, with unveiled face, beholds that same glory.

90:17- see on 90:3

Joshua had been charged to be strong, of good courage, not fearful nor be dismayed. Yet he had a tendency to forget those charges, the implications of his having been called by God for a purpose; and needed to be reminded of them as he forgot or lost faith in them. Perhaps this is why he is an otherwise surprising omission from the list of faithful men and women in Hebrews 11. And here of course is the challenge to us. We too have been given commissions and callings. Whether it be to raise a Godly family, to establish an ecclesia in a certain place, to overcome a specific vice...the obstacles will flee before us, every place where the soles of our feet rest, will be blessed...if we truly believe in God's purpose with us. Yet like Joshua, we usually fail to have a full faith in this. We get distracted by the views of others, peer pressure, worried by lack of resources, discouraged by setbacks; when it is belief in God's most basic initial promises to us that will overcome them. Joshua's fear is all the more reprehensible when we consider the testimony of Ps. 91. Here Moses speaks about Joshua, the one who dwelt in the secret place or tabernacle of God (Ps. 91:1 = Ex. 33:11), and who therefore was miraculously preserved throughout the wilderness wanderings. Thousands of Joshua's generation died at his side from the various plagues which wasted out his generation during those wanderings; but they never came near him (Ps. 91:5-8). As a result of this, he was commanded by Moses to "not be afraid" (Ps. 91:5), perhaps Moses was thinking specifically about peer pressure, with the assurance that truly God would hear Joshua's prayers (Ps. 91:14,15). His amazing preservation during the wilderness years ought to have instilled a faith and lack of fearfulness within him; and yet the implication is that he did very often fall prey to fearfulness in

later life. Just as with us, the circumstances of earlier life are controlled by the Father to give us faith with which to cope with later crises; but we don't always learn the lessons we are intended to.

Moses considered that Joshua would "say of Jehovah, He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in whom I trust" (Ps. 91:2). And yet only twice does Joshua use the phrase "my God" or "my Lord". It seems that Moses is imputing to Joshua a higher level of intimacy with God than he actually achieved.

Ps. 91:10 seems to look back to Job 5:19: "He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee" . "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling". Ps. 91 is Moses' encouragement to Joshua that the destroying Angel in the wilderness would not harm him, but he would be protected by the Angels who would "keep thee in all thy ways" (v. 11). Thus Moses may have seen Job 5:19 to be talking about evil brought by Angels of evil (Ps. 78:49 shows his appreciation of these)- i. e. Job's satan Angel who brought the trials.

The Psalm describes how Joshua was miraculously preserved from the punishments which befell his generation in the wilderness; thousands fell at his side from the various plagues sent to waste away his peer group. But he was preserved. In this context we read that the Angels would be given charge over him, lest he dash his foot against a stone during that wilderness journey (Ps. 91:11,12). Yet these words were understood by the Lord Jesus as relevant to Him personally, when *He* was in the wilderness (Mt. 4:6). The Lord Jesus clearly saw Joshua as a type of Himself. The double application of Psalm 91 to both Joshua and Jesus makes Joshua a potential Messiah.

"He shall give His Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the adder shalt thou trample under feet" (Ps. 91:11-13). It is suggested that this be read as a description of the Angels spiritually protecting Christ against sin, especially during His wilderness temptations. "Keep" in v. 11 is the same word used in Gen. 3:24, and thus alludes to the Angels keeping men in the way to the tree of life- not physically but spiritually preserving them. The figure of dashing the foot against a stone suggests the idea of spiritual stumbling against a "rock of offence" or stumblingstone. The Angels bore Jesus up to help Him avoid these. The treading underfoot of the adder must be another connection with Genesis 3; the seed of the woman trampling sin underfoot. This conquest of sin by Jesus was therefore partly due to Angelic strengthening of Him. Through them "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself", making Christ a sin-offering for us.

95:7-11 The events of Ex. 17 are the basis for Ps. 95. This is largely a Psalm of praise for what God did for Israel in the wilderness, whilst also commenting on the way they tragically put God to the test, and complained about His care for them. Now the words of Ps. 95:7- 11 are directly quoted in Heb.3:7- 11 concerning the experience of the new Israel. The simple conclusion from this is that we are really intended to see the events of Ex.17 as directly relevant for us.

95:11 See on Ex. 34:9

Ps 96

:7 *Give... glory and strength*- The very same Hebrew words used about how David felt he wanted to give glory and strength [honour] to the Lord (Ps. 62:7)

:7,8 The radical nature of what is being suggested in Ps. 96 (especially :7,8) and many similar Psalms can easily be overlooked. The Psalmist is urging Gentiles to come and worship with Israel, proceeding into the tabernacle courts and thence into "the beauty of holiness", i.e. the Most Holy Place ['holiness' being read here as a noun rather than an adjective- it is the same Hebrew word elsewhere translated "sanctuary" and related to the Hebrew word used for "sanctuary" in :6]. Perhaps the triple command to 'Sing to the Lord' in the opening verses alludes to Israel's three feasts, as does the triple, repetitive verses of Ps. 99 (:1-3, 4,5, 6-9) which likewise bid the world to come to Israel's worship. The Psalmist is inviting Gentiles to come in to the worship of Israel and proceed where only the High Priest could venture once / year. It was the equivalent of proclaiming an open table policy in the most redneck and exclusive of churches. The common assumption of expositors is that the Psalmist has in view the Kingdom age, but this seems precluded by his appeal to the Gentiles to come and worship exactly because of the good news that the Lord is coming to judge the earth in righteousness (:13)- which is quoted about the return of Christ to earth in Acts 17:31. The holiness boundaries taught by the Law were only teaching mechanisms, which is why they were removed by the open Christ. David for one got to this point well before most other Israelites did, acting as the High Priest (1 Chron. 16:3), entering the sanctuary when not a Levite (Ps. 63:2) and experiencing forgiveness and salvation quite outside the Law rather than the Law's penalty of death. Most of Ps. 96 is to be found in David's Psalm at the bringing of the ark to Zion in 1 Chron. 16, so we can safely assume David to have been the author. His outreach to the Gentiles is typical of the spirit of the Bathsheba Psalms, where he vows to tell the whole world of God's grace. It's not that the experience of sin and forgiveness makes a person somehow weak and wishy washy acceptant of anyone and anything. The experience of God's grace at close quarters leads us to realize how radical was His acceptance of us and thereby we should proactively seek to be acceptant of all those who are afar off. And so David perceived that God's Name (His characteristics, of which grace is uttermost) deserved glory to be given to it- simply for what it was (:8). And that glory is "due" from all, including the Gentiles- and so they should be invited across all holiness boundaries to come with their offerings to God. Thus Yahweh's greatness above all other gods was what led David to appeal to "all you gods" [perhaps put by metonymy for the idol worshipping peoples] to come and worship before Yahweh (Ps. 97:7). The appeal was to be global and not just to Israel because David perceived that actually the truth of God is proclaimed by "the whole earth" and "heavens" (Ps. 97:5,6). Of course, the call is for the Gentile idolators to "come" to Yahweh's sanctuary, and not for God's people to leave Yahweh and go to *them*. And they were to "bring an offering", to make a commitment to the God they were being invited to come close to (Ps. 96:8). Ps. 98:3-5 continues this radical appeal to the Gentile world, but it urges them to come and worship (which involved coming to the sanctuary in Israel) exactly because God has been so gracious to sinful Israel. Israel's extreme sin and God's radical grace and patience with them for *not* being good witnesses to the Gentiles... was to serve as encouragement for the Gentiles to come to Israel's God and praise Him, confident that their sins too could be forgiven. The same idea is found in Ps. 99:1-5- because of God's grace to Jacob / Israel, an undefined group are bidden come to Zion, to the very cherubim (in the Most Holy Place) to exalt and praise God at His footstool. This group, in line with the preceding Psalms, are surely the Gentile world. "Let *them* praise Your great Name" (Ps. 99:3) would surely make most sense if it referred to the Gentiles, seeing that David or the Psalmist was Israelite. We see the same idea in Ps. 97- 97:1 begins with an appeal to the islands of the Gentiles to 'rejoice' and 'be glad', but the same two Hebrew words are used in 97:8 about how Zion- those in the very temple mount-

likewise rejoice and are glad. The very "ends of the earth" who saw God's salvation of His people are invited to praise Him for it (Ps. 98:3,4)- the invitation to join in praise was effectively an invitation to join in worship, and thereby to become part of God's covenant people. And on a personal level, David's invitation of others to praise God with the harp (Ps. 98:5) was effectively asking them to share his personal praise of God- for he was known for his personal praising of the Lord with the harp. The reason for joy was that judgment day is coming (Ps. 98:9 cp. Acts 17:31)- judgment was a joyful prospect, not a dread uncertainty, because God's judgments are ahead of time revealed in His word.

99:1- see on Ex. 25:8

The four cherubim covered the ark, over which dwelt an Angel; Ps. 99:1,7 therefore describes the Angel as dwelling between the cherubim: "The Lord reigneth. . . He sitteth between the cherubims. . . He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept His testimonies, and the ordinance that He gave them". These latter things were all done by the Angel. Also relevant is Ps. 68:17,18: "The chariots of God are. . . thousands of Angels; the Lord is among them, as in. . . the Holy place". One Angel, which dwelt in the Holy Place, was therefore central to those thousands of others. See too Is. 37:16,17 on this. Similarly, Isaiah saw "the King, the Lord of Hosts (Angels) sitting between the cherubim" (Is. 6:5). The phrase 'living God' may mean 'the God of the living ones', and would therefore describe this mighty Angel- it is linked with "the Lord of Hosts" (Angels) in Jer. 23:36 and the Angel that dwelt in the temple (Ps. 42:2).

99:7 The "they" could refer to Moses, Aaron and Samuel- but the "them" in the context is the "them" to whom God spoke in the pillar of cloud, who were given God's law ("the ordinance that He gave them"). That group didn't include Samuel, who lived centuries later. The "them" is the group whose sinful works are to be judged by God, albeit in mercy (:8). The "them" is surely Israel- and this is in line with God's imputation of righteousness to His people, not beholding iniquity in Jacob, because He so loved them (Num. 23:21). This is as big a problem for us to get our heads around as are the NT references to our appearing [Gk. 'being presented as'] faultless before the presence of His glory... without spot *in His sight*.

In the same way as the Angels are so closely associated with their charges that they are identified with them, so the Angels are described as the things in the natural world which they have created. The quotation of Ps. 102:26 in Heb. 1:10 can appear to pose major problems for belief in the humanity of Christ and that the world will never be destroyed. "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail". The context in Hebrews is again Christ's superiority over the Angels; however, the context in Ps. 102 is of Christ on the cross thinking of the eternity of God, how that "of old", "in the beginning" (clearly alluding back to the beginning of the natural creation in Gen. 1), God created the Heavens and earth by His Angel-hands. But "they shall perish. . . wax old like a garment. . . as a vesture shalt thou change them" (Ps. 102:26). This language is similar to that used elsewhere about the ending of the Angel-oriented Mosaic Law (e. g. Heb. 8:13). Thus the literal Heavens and earth will not perish, but the Angelic system that created them will do.

Thus both the natural creation and the Mosaic system are identified exactly with the Angels that created them.

103:7- see on Ex. 34:27

Angels are given specific directives by God which they go and execute to the best of their ability and then report back to God- His "Angels. . that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word" (Ps. 103:21).

104:3,4 -See on Dan. 5:23

"Canst thou send lightnings (Angels) that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are (Septuagint: 'We do Thy pleasure?')" (Job 38:35). Compare this with "Ye ministers of His, that do His pleasure" (Ps. 104:4).

104:13 See on Mt. 6:26

Ps. 104:14,15 speaks of the blessing of "wine that maketh glad the heart of man". This doesn't mean we are to drink alcohol until we feel "merry". This phrase and those surrounding it are not talking about the effect of crops on the bodies of people, but rather the effect of a good harvest on the emotions of those gathering them.

105:2 David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. When he sung Psalms, he invited them to come and sing along with him (Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1).

We know that Joseph in prison was typical of Christ's death. Ps. 105:17-23 is the Spirit's commentary upon the sufferings of Joseph: " He (God) sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant; whose feet they hurt with fetters; he was laid in iron: until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him...Israel *also* came into Egypt" . In the context of the Psalm, God is comforting Israel that all their sufferings had been experienced by Joseph. Israel as a nation are often spoken of as being in prison in a Gentile world (Ps. 79:11; 102:20; Is. 42:7,22; 49:9); just as Joseph was. Prison and death are often associated because a spell in prison was effectively a death sentence, so bad were the conditions. Israel being in prison is therefore a symbol of a living death. On the cross, Christ was the great, supreme prisoner (Ps. 69:33- this is an intensive plural, referring to a singular great prisoner). Like Joseph, He went through all the emotions of the prisoner; the shame, depression, introspection. As Israel were comforted in their living death by the fact that there was an individual in the past who had gone through all they were going through as a group; so the new Israel ought to take comfort together in contemplating the experiences of Christ. He bore *our* communal sorrows, griefs and sins; this is why we as a community rather than purely as individuals need to be bound together in remembering Christ.

The sufferings of Joseph were supremely in His mind. They had to be so varied and yet also intense so as to include the traumas of each of us. Ps. 105:18 highlights the mental aspects of Joseph's suffering. The verse is badly translated in the AV: " Whose feet (the same word is translated ability, endurance, journey) they hurt (Heb. 'to browbeat or depress') with fetters: (i.e.) his soul (AVmg.) came into iron" . His very soul was in iron, trapped, oppressively boxed in as he lay in the darkness. As Christ hung in the darkness He too was depressed by the weight of His mental burden, a burden so great it must have pushed His brain to maximum neurological capacity. The spirit of the crucified

Christ is in Ps. 142:7: " Bring my soul out of prison...the righteous shall compass me about" (cp. Ps. 22:22). Christ poured out His soul unto death; " he was taken away by distress" (Is. 53:12,8 AVmg.) suggests that it was the mental crisis in the brain of Christ on the cross which resulted in His death. This is why Pilate marvelled that He died so quickly. It is evident from this that the physical process of crucifixion did not kill Christ, but rather the heartburst (both figurative and literal) which it brought upon Him. Do we not sense that striving in our minds as we fellowship His sufferings? Surely we do, but from a great distance. Yet we should sense it more and more, it should make us get out of this sense of drifting which we all too often have, day by day *drifting* along with very little stirring up our minds. Here is the challenge of the Joseph record and seeing Joseph as a type of Christ; to just begin to capture the mental anguish of the Son of God as He hung there.

Because of the high degree of God manifestation in Moses, he was so severely punished for not sanctifying Yahweh in the eyes of Israel in his sin of smiting the rock. Israel provoking his spirit to sin at this time is spoken of in the context of the way in which they provoked *God's* spirit (Ps. 106:7,29,33,43) - such was God's manifestation in Moses even while he was sinning. And so God is manifest in sinful men like us too. Moses knew this, he knew his closeness to God through manifestation, and yet he yearned to see God physically, he struggled with his distance from God (Ex. 33:18,20). The spirit of Christ in the Psalms is similar. And for us too.

Ps.106:13 seems to describe Israel's rebellions in language relevant to Saul, as if he represented them: "They sang his praise (cp. Saul prophesying). They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel" - cp. Saul in 1 Sam. 13:8.

106:32- see on Ex. 32:32

106:32,33- see on Dt. 1:37

Ps. 106:44,45,23: "He (the wilderness Angel) heard their cry: and He remembered for them His covenant, and repented according to the multitude of His mercies ('mercies' is a word often associated with the promises). . . He (the destroyer Angel) said that He would destroy them, had not Moses stood before him in the breach. . . lest He should destroy them". The Angel's repentance is very often mentioned along with Him recalling the promises He made to the patriarchs. This would explain why powerful prayers (e. g. of Jacob and Ezra) often make mention of the promises- because it is by recognizing that the answer to our request will further the fulfilment of those promises that our Angel is likely to repent and hear us.

107:22 David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. When he sung Psalms, he invited them to come and sing along with him (Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1).

Perhaps it was a Satan-Angel that stood at Judas' right hand (i. e. to influence him), confirming him in the way he had chosen to go, as God hardened Pharaoh's already hard heart (Ps. 109:6,7).

111:1 David was very much involved in Israel his people. He saw himself as their representative. When he sung Psalms, he invited them to come and sing along with him (Ps. 105:2; 107:22; 111:1).

The way Moses pleaded with God to change His mind and not destroy Israel for the sake of what the surrounding nations would say is indeed inspirational to us all. It surely inspired David to pray likewise- for "wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now there God?" (Ps. 115:2).

Ps. 118:10-12 = Jud. 16:2; Samson inspired David. The Spirit came on David as it did on Samson (1 Sam. 16:13); they were both empowered to kill lions, whilst keeping the fact a secret. And in both those acts they were taught that they would deliver God's people from the Philistines (1 Sam. 17:34-37).

118:22 "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone" (Ps. 118:22) is clearly quoted in the New Testament with reference to Christ's exaltation. But in the context, these words are part of a personal prayer of praise from David for God's healing of him and rescuing him from Saul's persecution.

Ps. 119 Ps.119 was written at the time of Saul's persecution of David. It mentions David as a young man devoting himself to the word rather than riches (v.72)- the riches which could have been his if he mentally surrendered to Saul, or if he killed Saul and took the kingdom. He often laments how he is in exile from Yahweh's word (v.43,46,54), which would have been on account of his being away from the sanctuary at Gibeah. He pleads the promise of the word that he would be preserved from Saul's persecution (v.41,58), and several times mentions Saul's attempts on his life (v.87,95,109,110). The following verses are evidently relevant to this period: 61,63,67,79,84 (= 1 Sam. 27:1),95,98 (= 1 Sam. 18:14,15),110 (cp. the 'snaring' with Michal),119 (the emphasis is on 'You will destroy the wicked like Saul- one day'),125 (David is often called Saul's servant),150,154 (= 1 Sam. 24:15), 157,161,165,176. Therefore in the face of such hatred and pain, feeling he must be careful of every step he took, emotionally and physically, David could rejoice: "I will walk at liberty (AVmg. 'at large'): for I seek thy precepts" .

119:18 "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. 119:18) may be alluding to the Angel opening Hagar's eyes to see a well of water (cp. the word) in the desert (Gen. 21:19). See on 119:135.

:41 *Come also unto me*- He wanted to have the spiritual experience of God's grace which he had seen experienced by others, e.g. Samuel.

Your salvation, according to Your word- The prophetic word that he would be king and therefore be saved from death at Saul's hand?

:42 *Him that reproaches*- The specific individual was surely Saul. David trusted in the prophetic word that he would be king. The Psalms repeatedly use the word "reproach" about Saul's campaign against David (Ps. 44:16; 57:3; 74:10; 102:8)- it must've included much slander which is unrecorded in the historical record, but which clearly was extremely hurtful to David. The reproach was as "a sword in the bones" to David (Ps. 42:10). The word of promise to us likewise includes the word of the Kingdom- and this is the answer to slander and "reproach" which alone can comfort us.

:44 This could be David's vision of the Kingdom- eternally being obedient to God's law. It's possible to interpret the strange Mosaic phrase "he who keeps the law shall even live in it" in the same way- that the life eternal will be all about obedience to God's law.

:46 *Kings*- Saul and Achish "king of Gath", both of whom David was "before" (1 Sam. 21:13).

:47 *Delight*- David's love of and "delight" in God's word is a theme of his (Ps. 119:48,16,70).

:49 *Remember the word*- Fulfill the prophetic word that David would become King.

:51 *The proud*- Saul, primarily (see :69,78). And yet Saul began humble. Power so often changes men into proud people. The link between power and pride, and God's desire that we should be humble, explains why we are often not given the power which we wish for in various ways. Saul was once "little in [his] own eyes".

:52 David took comfort from the actions and justice of God as displayed in Bible history, even though it seemed God had not yet acted in that way to him.

:59 Implying David fell into some sin during the wilderness years? There are many hints throughout Ps. 119 that he had ample experience of sin and repentance at this time- e.g. :67.

:61 A reference to unrecorded robbery whilst in the wilderness? Or an allusion to his treatment at the hands of Nabal?

:62 David at this time in the wilderness had not seen God's justice done in his case, but he thanked God that God had done justice in history.

:63 This and other references in Ps. 119 (e.g. :74,79) to David's keen sense of fellowship with other sincere believers reflects his feelings towards Samuel and perhaps some of the others who came and lived with him in the wilderness.

:64 *Teach me*- David was likely illiterate and his knowledge of God's law would've been taught by Samuel and faithful priests. Without them, he was driven to ask God to directly teach him.

:65 *Dealt well*- Only in a spiritual sense, for David in the wilderness was apparently not given immediate justice by God and had a very difficult life.

:66 Believing God's word and being taught by God are two different, if related things.

:67 See on :59. David implies he had sinned before the wilderness years. He refers to his "sins of youth" elsewhere. He was not, therefore, just an innocent teenager looking after the sheep and composing Psalms in some ethereal teenage spiritual bliss.

:69 *The proud*- See on :51.

:71 David was driven to love God's word by the wilderness persecution- and Ps. 119 is his celebration of that.

:73 That God has created us means we want to know Him more and form a relationship with Him. Our search for the invisible Father is what drives us to His word.

:74 See on :63.

:78 *The proud*- See on :51.

:79 *Turn unto me*- See on :63.

119:98- see on 1 Sam. 18:5.

The passages which talk about God's face shining upon men refer primarily to the Angel in the Most Holy shining forth in blessing upon men. Ps. 119:135 has the same idea: "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes". Here the reference to the Angel is paralleled with having the understanding opened to the Word, implying that the Angels (especially our guardian who knows our needs so much?) open our eyes to the word (Ps. 119:18). See on 119:18.

119:176 "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments" (Ps. 119:176) was likely written by David with his mind on his follies relating to Bathsheba; and yet it is taken by the Lord and used as the basis for the parable of the lost sheep, whereby all who have sinned go through the David experience.

Ps. 132:8 "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest: Thou, and the ark of Thy strength". The whole Psalm is about the ark, and concerning its location in Zion God says "this is My rest for ever; here will I dwell" (v. 14). The "rest" is often used about the tabernacling of God in the ark- thus Dt. 12:1-8 warns the people not to use existing altars in Canaan "for ye are not as yet come to the rest. . . there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there" (v. 9,11). Clearer associations between the "rest" and the Ark are:

- Num. 10:33 "The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them. . . to search out a resting place"

- 1 Chron. 28:2 "An house of rest for the ark"

However, the real resting place of God's Name is not in the literal ark, but in the hearts of people humble to God's Word: "Where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? . . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word" (Is. 66:1,2). God's Angel literally dwelt in the ark, and they are His eyes through which He "looks" to the humble man. Thus God's Angels are searching the earth for people with hearts humble to the word, so that God can "rest" with us- and we with Him. The "ark" is spoken of as going ahead of Israel to spy out a resting place for them (Num. 10:33); but the ark is being put by metonymy for the Angel within it. Psalm 132 speaks of God choosing and desiring the ark's resting place, as if He engages in a process of searching. Such a process is only befitting of the Angels, seeing that God has absolute knowledge of every heart. The double emphasis on "the God of Jacob" (v. 2,5) being associated with the ark strengthens the Angelic context, seeing "the God of Jacob" is an Angelic term. Similarly "My covenant" of v. 12 points to the Angels, seeing they ordained the covenant.

139:6 "Such knowledge (the basic knowledge of God which, in the context, he has just outlined) is too *wonderful* for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139:6). David doesn't mean that the things of God are too wonderful for him to understand, and he just quits in trying to handle them. Throughout the Psalms, David repeatedly speaks of the *wonder* of God, how he wishes to extol the *wonder* of God, and how he mourns the tragedy of the fact that Israel generally had not grasped the *wonder* of their God. He asks for his eyes to be opened so that the *wonder* of God's ways might be made known to him (Ps. 119:18). The Hebrew word translated "wonder" or "wondrous" was evidently one of David's favourites. Yet he says that although he sees the wonder of the knowledge

of God, he feels it is " too wonderful *for me*" - perhaps " for me" is where the emphasis should be. It may be that David spoke of the knowledge of God as being " too wonderful for me" with his eye on Job's experience. If Ps. 139 was written in the aftermath of his physical and spiritual crisis at the time of Bathsheba, David would have seen himself as coming out of it with the same sense of spiritual growth as Job after his months of crisis: " Now mine eye seeth thee...I am vile...things too wonderful for me" all have a certain ring with the sentiments David expresses after Bathsheba. It can be demonstrated that the repentance and restoration of David after the Bathsheba incident is used, through New Testament allusion, as a prototype for the spiritual growth of each of us. This means that the terrible, crushing humbling of Job, of David, of Moses, must in some way at some time be replicated in the experience of every true saint, who struggles up the same graph of spiritual growth. From each of us there must be wrung the deep, essential realization: " I am vile... I know (*now*) that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee... therefore have I uttered that I understood thee; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not" .

140:9,10 There's a link between David and us is in Ps. 140:9,10, which speaks of burning coals falling on the head of David's enemies; yet those words are effectively quoted in Rom. 12:20 concerning all believers. David sets himself up in the Psalms as our pattern. He speaks of himself and then applies the point to all of his readers. In other words, we really are to see David as representative of ourselves; we need to change our minds and lives so this really is the case.

143:9- see on Ps. 63:8.

143:10 David asked: "Let thy good spirit / Angel lead me in the plain country" (Ps. 143:10 RVmg.)- as if he realized that there were Angels / spirits of evil, as well as of good. Thus we too pray not to be lead into temptation- but rather, lead in the way of life. Angels do lead us in life, but they can lead us in either the downward or the upward spiral.

144 Relevant to David's victory over Goliath. See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

144:7 send- see on 57:3

147:15- see on Jer. 23:18,22

148:2- see on Job 38:16

148:7 waters- see on Rev. 16:5.

2:2 *Incline your ear*- Solomon uses the same phrase in appealing for his son to incline his ear to Solomon's words (Prov. 4:20). Solomon came to see himself as the embodiment of wisdom, and came to assume that whatever he said or thought must be right because he possessed wisdom. This comes to a peak in 5:1- "attend [s.w. "incline" in 2:2] unto *my* wisdom, bow your ear to *my* understanding". Solomon made the classic mistake of assuming that his will and word were effectively equivalent to the word of God. In Prov. 6:21 he speaks of the need to bind the law about your heart and neck; but in Song 8:6 he asks his Gentile lover to "set ME as a seal upon thine heart" and arm. And often in Proverbs he uses the language of the blessings for keeping God's law and turns them into the blessings for keeping *his* law; e.g. "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart" (Prov. 7:1,2). And we all do the same in essence, whenever we assume that our consciences are effectively the will of God; when

we 'play God' by allowing our words and will to count as if they are *His* word.

2:8 *Preserves the way*- s.w. Gen. 3:24; 28:20; Ex. 23:20; Ps. 91:11. These verses suggest God keeps us in the way by Angelic involvement. The cherubim would keep [s.w. preserve] the way to the tree of life- this is a promise of Divine care to lead His people to that tree, rather than a judgment against man. But we on our side must also keep the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:19; Jud. 2:22; Dt. 8:2,6; 11:22; 30:16 etc.). The way God 'preserved [Israel] in the way' through the wilderness to the promised land (Josh. 24:17) looks forward to how we are potentially kept in the way through the wilderness after baptism towards the Kingdom. David could say that he had preserved the way (2 Sam. 22:22) and he asks Solomon to keep / preserve the way (1 Kings 2:3,4); but here Solomon puts the emphasis on the promise that God will keep us in the way, rather than upon our need to preserve the way. Likewise he overlooked the conditional aspect of the promises about David's Son being Messiah. God directly told Solomon at least twice that he must make effort to keep the way (1 Kings 3:14; 11:38), but he misquotes this in 1 Kings 8:25 to the effect that God would keep His people in the way, by inclining their hearts to do so (1 Kings 8:58). David had spoken of God's ability to direct hearts into keeping His way (Ps. 119:5), but this was not the blank cheque assurance which Solomon seems to have taken it as; David speaks of the effort he had to make to keep himself in the way (Ps. 39:1). Worse still, Solomon told his children to keep / preserve *his* way (Prov. 8:32), again confusing himself with God.

2:16 Solomon married "strange women" i.e. Gentiles (1 Kings 11:1) and was led astray by them. Yet at the very time he was marrying them, he wrote in his wisdom that the words of wisdom would preserve / keep / defend a Jewish man from being damaged by them (Prov. 2:16; 6:24; 7:5). The connection would seem to suggest that Solomon reasoned that because he had wisdom, because he had 'the truth', he could therefore enjoy these "strange women" without them corrupting *his* heart; because *he* had wisdom. Thus he thought that mere possession of Divine truth was some kind of insurance policy against moral sin being counted to him. And so many have gone down this road; so many who knew more true theology than many have at the same time made an awful mess of their personal lives, just as Solomon did. This is why the higher one goes in the echelons of Christian organizations, the greater the learning and knowledge a person has, the more powerful is the tendency towards gross hypocrisy in moral terms. The point is, of course, that all the knowledge of God which we quite rightly seek after must be *personally applied*. The very possession of it and teaching of it to others can of itself make a man or woman demotivated to personally apply it. He foretold that the people would sigh when a wicked man ruled them (Prov. 29:2 RV)- and they did "sigh" because of the heavy burdens he placed upon them (1 Kings 12:4). He imposed the "yoke" of tribute upon the people (2 Chron. 10:4), whereas he himself had warned that a king that imposes tribute on his people "overthrows" a country (Prov. 29:4 RV mg.). He saw it all as true- and yet it was far from him personally.

4:20 See on 2:2.

5:1 See on 2:2.

3:11- see on Job 5:11

3:13-15- see on Job 5:11

5:20- see on Ecc. 7:26

"The ways of man are before the eyes (angels) of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings" (Prov. 5:21). God pondering us (root 'to roll flat') is surely the language of limitation, and applicable to the Angels. God's Angels are pondering us, as they did Abraham, Job etc.

7:1 Proverbs contains a number of Samson allusions (16:32; 25:28). But the most powerful are in 7:1,5,22,25-27, where the young Israelite is commended to God's word, because this will keep him from falling to the wiles of the Gentile woman, who throws down strong men into the way of miserable death. Solomon evidently writes with allusion to Samson; that here was the man who loved God's word, and yet went so astray with women. And tragically enough, Solomon himself did just the same! He realized and lamented the tragedy of Samson, as a lover of the word who fell for the Gentile woman; and then, with all his wisdom, he did the very same thing! Here, for all to see, is the crucial difference between knowledge and faith.

10:1 *Wise son*- Although this is all inspired wisdom, Solomon does seem to have his mind on his own self-justification in the way he expresses it. All his many references to "David my father" suggest his spirituality was a living out of parental expectation. He had been called the "wise son" of David (1 Kings 5:7; 2 Chron. 2:12) even before David died, and he clearly wanted to live out that expectation by asking for wisdom and implying his father would've been so happy with him. Yet his heart was far from personal wisdom, as he later admits in Ecclesiastes.

10:2 *Treasures*- Heb. storehouses. Solomon built these for his horses and his wealth. We have a tendency to do the very thing we know is wrong, just as Solomon married Gentile women despite all his warnings against doing so. This is one window on the ability of religious people to be the worse hypocrites.

10:3 In the court of Heaven, God "thrusteth away the desire of the wicked" (Prov. 10:3 RV)- as if their prayers are rejected there.

10:7 The Hebrew idea of 'name' is of reputation, and that is demonstrated here by being paralleled with 'memory'. Who we are and what we spiritually achieve will be eternally remembered. Careers, attainment of wealth etc. will fade away [AV "rot"].

10:8 *Receive commandments*- The same words used about Moses receiving commandments on Sinai (Ex. 34:4). This is one of many times when the average Israelite was encouraged to rise up to the spirit of Moses. The contrast is between receiving God's word and thus getting into an upward spiral of spirituality; and talking so much that we don't receive God's words. That same tension is found in :14.

10:12 *Covers*- Not in the sense of turning a blind eye, but of forgiving just as God covers or deals with / atones [Heb. 'covers'] for sin.

10:18 Whether we speak the slander or think it and keep our mouth tactfully shut- it's all the same before God. Nicespeak and tact aren't the same as the true spirituality which includes the love which

thinks no evil. See on :20.

10:20 The tongue and the heart / mind are paralleled- thoughts are as bad as words. See on :18.

10:25 *Everlasting foundation*- Who we are now is the basis of who we will eternally be. Hence the supreme importance of character formation and personality developed in this life.

10:25- see on Ps. 35:5

11:1 See on Mt. 6:26

The slothful man catcheth / roasteth not that which *he* took in hunting” (Prov. 12:27 RVmg.) may be one of the Proverbs’ historical commentaries- in this case, on Jacob. The implication would be that Jacob was lazy in staying in the tent and not hunting.

Prov. 15:29: "The Lord is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous". This implies that God is too physically far away from the wicked to hear their prayer. Ps. 10:1 is one of the many references in the Psalms to God being physically far away when a prayer is not answered: "Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?". This is the language of limitation- God Himself hears every sound of our lips, including the prayers of the wicked, which He says are like smoke in His nostrils and an annoyance to Him. So if our prayers are heard when God is 'near' us, does it not follow that when our Angel is physically near us, then our prayer is more quickly heard? Hence Jesus' Angel was physically with Him in Gethsemane in order to encourage Him in prayer. Once we accept that prayer goes first to an Angel, then this suggestion looks more sensible.

" When a man's ways please Yahweh, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7) is a reference to Esau's surprising peace with Jacob (Proverbs is packed with such historical commentary). Yet as they made peace, Jacob was saying that Esau was his Lord, and he was Esau's servant (32:18; 33:14), in designed denial of the Divine prophecy that Esau was to serve Jacob (25:23). Yet at this very time, Jacob's ways pleased Yahweh.

"The wrath of a king is as messengers (Angels) of death" (Prov. 16:14)- as if to say that as the Angels- of evil and death in this case- are zealous to obey the king of Heaven's command, so are the messengers who obey a human king's over-hasty command to kill someone.

Proverbs 17 is one of the best examples of where the Proverbs appear to be a muddled collection of true sayings but lacking any structure. Are the Proverbs really like precious stones that must be emptied out of the bag and rearranged by theme? In which case, why didn't God do so at the start when inspiring the book? My comments are as follows:

- Some of the Proverbs are basic truisms and maxims which have equivalents in any culture. Solomon wrote the book at the start of his reign when God gave him his wisdom.

But Solomon loved Egyptian and Gentile women right from the start of his reign. There are strong similarities both in content and genre between Proverbs and e.g.

the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope*. It could be that Solomon took various things from the literature of his father in law in Egypt... or of course it could be that Solomon's book of Proverbs was designed to preach to the Egyptians and surrounding nations in their own terms and in a familiar genre. Much is written by Solomon about about the establishment of

the throne on the basis of truth and justice; and this is commonly found in Egyptian literature about the Pharaohs.

- The text hangs together far better in the original Hebrew. Most people were illiterate, and so the book was designed to be memorized. There are many patterns in the book which depend upon the alliteration and rhyming of words and ideas to enable memorization. This was typical of wisdom literature of the time. There are similar initial syllables of words

and verses, or beginning with the same letter. There's much word play, similar sounds repeat between verses if read out loud. Thus the root 'sdq' [righteousness] occurs

in various words which connect various proverbs which appear unrelated to each other in English translation. These sound patterns form a chain which enables memorization. Thus

16:27-29 all begin with the word 'ish', 'a man'. Catchwords link adjacent verses.

- Watch out for clusters of verses which do have the same theme; the verses which don't appear to be in a cluster are likely connected by alliteration etc. for easy memorization.

- My own hunch is that although the Proverbs are inspired by God, they were also presented by Solomon with a strong hint of self-justification. He wrote them when he had just inherited

the throne from his father David, whom he idolized and was obsessed with. He sought to justify his father against all the various factions who were in Israel who were not sympathetic

to David and therefore to Solomon. Almost every other verse in the book appears to have some such sideways swipe at the likes of Saul, Nabal, Absalom or Joab- whilst presenting Solomon

as the wise son with whom alone David was pleased. Solomon should've sought his self-worth and value in God's opinion of him; and he should've trusted the promises to David of God

establishing his throne and line, rather than seeking to as it were fulfill them for himself by using God's Truth and Wisdom to establish himself at others' expense. Chapter 17

is a parade example of this.

17:4 *A wicked doer* - Saul promised to no more 'do wickedly' to David (1 Sam. 26:21). The wicked doer is therefore an allusion to Saul, who listened to lies against David from the likes of Doeg. Note how "false" is the same word in as in 1 Sam. 15:23 about Saul's iniquity; "give heed" is s.w. "hearken" in 1 Sam. 15:22.

17:8 *Prosper*- A word commonly used about David being wise and prospering wherever he turned during his period at the court of Saul (s.w. 1 Sam. 18:5,14,15,30). The words are also those used by David to Solomon when he charged Solomon to follow God's word so "that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn" (1 Kings 2:3). It could be argued that the "evil" and "foolish" man in Proverbs is often alluding to Saul and Nabal ['fool'- s.w., the former husband of David's wife Abigail], and the wise and righteous to David and Solomon- confirming the impression that whilst all that is said is true and inspired, it was also spoken by Solomon to the end of justifying both himself and his father David, whose name was under a cloud in some parts of Israel. There are probably many more allusions to David's life in Proverbs which we don't pick up on because we don't know all that happened in

David's life.

17:9 The idea of 'covering sin' is surely an allusion to the words of David, Solomon's father, who wrote a song he wished all Israel to sing- the 'maschil' Psalm 32: "Blessed is he whose transgression... is covered... I acknowledged my sin, my iniquity I did not hide [s.w. "cover"]' I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" (Ps. 32:1,5). Because David did not cover his sin, God covered it. This is clearly in Solomon's mind in Prov. 28:13: "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy". So in line with Solomon's obsession with David, it's likely he also has David in view here in 17:9. In which case, the One seeking love by covering sin is God. Love is to be our response to the covering of our sins. And yet the words also apply to us- we are to cover others sins in forgiving them, and gossiping to others about them [the second half of the Proverb] is therefore rooted in our unforgiveness. This is a helpful thought in analyzing why we gossip or repeat others' sins to others- it's because we've not forgiven the sin. See on 17:13.

17:10 If 17:9 alludes to David's sin with Bathsheba, this verse would allude to Nathan's rebuke of David being accepted by him.

17:11 The "evil man" is often an allusion to Saul, and the Proverb related to it is often a justification of Solomon's father David. The Hebrew for "rebellion" is exactly that used about Saul in 1 Sam. 15:23. The "cruel *malak* / Angel" sent by God would then refer to the evil spirit / Angel *from the Lord* sent upon Saul (1 Sam. 16:14; 19:9).

17:12 An allusion to Nabal, 'fool', going out to meet David. "A bear robbed of her whelps" is exactly how David is described in 2 Sam. 17:8.

17:13 This is another of the many references by Solomon in the Proverbs to the life of his father David. The Hebrew words for "requite evil for good" are found in 1 Sam. 25:21 concerning how Nabal requited evil for David's good. The impression that the Proverbs are merely isolated sayings is somewhat ameliorated when we consider that many of them are a running commentary upon David's life, and they are connected by the common theme of allusion to David rather than a semantic connection between them.

17:14 *Strife*- Blaming strife and "contention" upon sinners is a common theme in Proverbs. But the same root word is used in 2 Sam. 19:9 regarding the "strife" and division which there was amongst Israel after Absalom's rebellion. Rather than seeing this as all part of the consequence of David's sin, Solomon instead justifies his father and blames his half brothers by saying that that "strife" was the result of their unwisdom. It could be argued that Solomon is making rather a crude allusion to this period by saying it is like urination... and the problem was with the person who began it, an allusion surely to Absalom, whom Solomon would've blamed for it all, rather than seeing it as partly the promised judgment upon David for his sin with Bathsheba.

17:15 This seems to be Solomon condemning his rival brother Absalom. 2 Sam. 15:4 records how "Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice"". The Hebrew for "justice" is the noun of the verb used here in Prov. 17:15. The implication is that Solomon blamed the 'time of strife' in Israel upon Solomon and his followers, whom Solomon is claiming were

wicked men whom Absalom wrongly justified. "The just" is how Saul described David (1 Sam. 24:17 s.w.). Verse 16 may be an allusion to some unrecorded incident in Absalom's life where he showed himself as having no interest in wisdom and thought it could be purchased with money.

17:17 *A friend*- There could be a reference here to David's 'friends' during the wilderness years (s.w. 1 Sam. 30:26; 2 Sam. 16:17) who were faithful to him even in his hard times, perhaps especially Solomon is alluding to Hushai, David's "friend" who was so loyal to him (2 Sam. 16:17). The same Hebrew word is used about Hushai in 1 Chron. 27:33, where it seems he was given an official title of "The King's Friend". The same Hebrew words "all times" is used in the eulogy of David in 1 Chron. 29:30 about "all the times" of David's life.

17:18 *Strikes hands*- These are the same two Hebrew words used about Joab 'thrusting his hand' into Absalom to kill him (2 Sam. 18:14). Joab later turned against David, and so again we see Solomon establishing his father's name and dynasty by using his 'wisdom' to conveniently condemn all the parties who were politically against him. Likewise 17:19 speaks of the man who is "exalted", but the same word is in 1 Sam. 10:23 about how Saul was "taller" than his brethren- it is an allusion to Saul, but rather indirectly, couched within the wisdom and truth being spoken. We can likewise so easily use God's Truth and wisdom in order to fuel our own petty self justification and family politics.

17:21 Perhaps this is a commentary upon David's sorrow at the death of his foolish son Absalom (as :25).

17:22 *A broken spirit*- Solomon's criticism of the melancholy are likely intended allusions to Saul.

17:23,26 Solomon's criticism of unjust judges surely looks back to how Absalom judged the cases of the men of Israel and by his injustice built up support for his rebellion against David and Solomon. There were few judges in Israel, and Solomon's condemnation of how others judge was therefore only really relevant to himself and a few others, it was not wisdom for the masses; and it was a kind of self-justification.

17:28 *When he holds his peace*- The very same words used about Saul, whom Solomon saw as the archetypical "fool", wisely holding his peace when despised at the start of his reign (1 Sam. 10:27).

Spiritual ambition means that we will desire to do some things which we can't physically fulfil- and yet they will be counted to us. Abraham is spoken of as having offered up Isaac- his intention was counted as the act. And Prov. 19:22 RV appropriately comments: "The desire of a man is the

measure of his kindness". It is all accepted according to what a man has, not what he has not. Faith is perfected / matured by the process of works (James 2:22,23). The works, the upward spiral of a life lived on the basis of faith, develop the initial belief in practice.

Prov. 20:1 says that "strong drink is a brawler" (RV). This is a metonymy- a drunk man is a brawler, not alcoholic drinks of themselves. But "strong drink" is put for 'a drunk man'. Alcohol is the alcoholic, and vice versa. This is some comfort for families of alcoholics who lament how alcohol so dominates their family member, and who marvel at the extent to which it is really so- that alcohol is the alcoholic, and the alcoholic lives for alcohol.

Angels have a special role in performing the miracle of preserving God's word intact. This work of the Angels is maybe referred to in Prov. 22:12 "The eyes (Angels) of the Lord preserve knowledge", which is now concentrated in the form of the written word.

23:25- see on Ecc. 7:26

The wicked woman lying in wait to kill the simple man (Prov. 23:25-27) is a clear enough reference to Delilah and her henchmen lying in wait in the bedroom. And yet, for all this reflection upon Samson, Solomon went and did *par excellence* according to Samson's well-studied folly. And we can do the same, in principle. There is this vast distance between knowledge and belief.

24: :2 *Mischief*- Ps. 7:14,16 twice refers to the "mischief" [s.w.] done to David by Cush [Ps. 7:1 states the Psalm is about the words and plans of Cush]. Solomon is again referring to how the enemies of his father, whose descendants and supporters were likely still threats to Solomon, were condemned by God.

:3 The "house" here refers to David's house / family- but this was established through Solomon's line by God's gracious promise to David, not by Solomon's wisdom. Again, his wisdom and possession of academic truth led him to forget the power of grace.

:4 *Chambers*- An allusion to Solomon's store cities where he placed his wealth. But that wealth was a *gift* from God to him (1 Kings 3:13), it was not *because of* his wisdom in itself. Again he fails to perceive grace because of his possession of Divine truth.

:5 *Increase strength*- David's house waxed stronger and stronger (2 Sam. 3:1)- but by grace, because God chose as a sovereign choice to work through Solomon and continue the Davidic line of rulership through him.

:6 *Counsellors*- David had two men specifically noted as his counsellors (his uncle Jonathan and Ahithophel- 1 Chron. 27:32,33) and likely he had others, e.g. Nathan the prophet. Again Solomon is justifying his father's Government.

:13 *Honey*- An allusion to how Saul forbade his men to eat honey but Jonathan ate a honeycomb in defiance of this (1 Sam. 14:29). But Solomon is unwittingly perhaps identifying himself with Samson, the only other Biblical character who found and ate a honeycomb- and he was well nigh destroyed by foreign women also.

:15 An allusion to how Saul sent men to lay in wait around David's house (1 Sam. 19:11).

:16 An allusion to David's moral failures- glorifying David in that he rose up after them.

:17 Alluding to how David did not rejoice when Saul fell in battle.

:20 *The candle*- God promised to give David a light / candle in Jerusalem through the kingship continuing through Solomon (same word in 1 Kings 11:36 "that David may have a light [candle, s.w.] always before Me in Jerusalem"). Solomon is justifying his own taking of the throne.

:21 Solomon [in the context of our note on :20] is suggesting that anyone who questions his right to the throne is not fearing God.

:23,24 An indirect criticism of Absalom's unjust giving of judgment being the basis upon which he garnered support for his rebellion against David (2 Sam. 15:6).

:27 Justifying how David prepared for the building of the temple.

:28 *Your neighbour without cause*- David is called Saul's "neighbour" (1 Sam. 15:28; 28:17). And he persecuted David "without cause" (1 Sam. 19:5; Ps. 35:7,19 69:4; 109:3; 119:161 etc.).

24:29 A justification of David's refusal to kill Saul.

31:10 The poem is an acrostic, each verse starting with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In terms of style, it's been observed that this was typical of the "heroic hymn." "It is the kind of hymn that typically would celebrate a soldier's mighty deeds and his victory in battle" [Waltke, ii, 516-517]. Domestic work is being lifted up to heroic status, which was not at all how the male based societies of the time saw it. Her "strength" (:17,25), fearlessness (:21,25) etc. are praised, and the Hebrew word translated "virtuous" is elsewhere translated as army, [military] company, band of soldiers, valiant, strong, war etc. (Ex. 14:4, 9, 28; Num. 31:14; 2 Sam. 8:9; Is. 10:14; Mic. 4:13). The military sense there in the word is clear. The word is used three times in Ruth; Boaz was a man of "power"(Ruth 2:1), and Ruth is called a "virtuous" woman who would "do mightily" (Ruth 3:11; 4:11). She appears to be the prototype of the woman of Prov. 31, but she is given the same title as the powerful Boaz. The point is, the strength was in different ways, but none the same, the power was joint between them, they were in a spiritual and psychological sense as equals. It appeared, of course, that Elimelech was the man of power and Ruth was the powerless female Gentile. But the record is making the point that they were equals.

:10 *More precious than jewels*- The very words used about wisdom in Prov. 3:15. The virtuous woman here is portrayed as the embodiment of the 'woman wisdom' with which Proverbs starts. Indeed Prov. 1:8 begins with an appeal to heed our mother's teaching, and concludes with Solomon

claiming to have done so himself. Solomon respected Bathsheba his mother (1 Kings 2:19) and appears to be justifying her as the most wonderful 'wise woman' ever- and he did so in the context of the sons of David's other wives pretending to the throne and being his political opponents.

An excellent wife who can find? - Perhaps this is Solomon cynically observing that none of his wives were like her, similar to his comment to this effect in Ecc. 7:28, which uses the same word for "find": "... which my soul has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found".

:12 *Not evil*- A swipe at David's other wives from the household of Saul?

31:15 *Maidens*- Despite having female servants and a husband "in the gate" (:23), presumably wealthy, this woman gets her hands dirty with making things with her own hands (:19 etc.).

"For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight (the Angels are God's eyes) wisdom, and knowledge, and joy" (Ecc. 2:26). "Sight"- refers to the Angels assessing us and giving us wisdom etc. in accordance with what they see of us?

Ecc. 5:1-7 is about how one should go "to the house of God" (the temple) to offer sacrifice and pray to God: "Be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools. . . let not thine heart be hasty to utter any word before God. . . when thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it (by bringing the vow to the temple). . . suffer not thy mouth (your prayers and vows) to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the Angel that it was an error"- as if there was an Angel in the temple, albeit manifest through a priest? Cp. v. 2 "let not thine heart be hasty to utter any word before God". The priest was "the messenger (Angel) of the Lord of Hosts" (Angels)- i. e. of the Angel in the temple? (Mal. 2:7). See on Ps. 78:60.

7: 2 *Will lay it to his heart*- The only other occurrence of this phrase is also in Ecclesiastes, at Ecc. 9:1 where Solomon says that the conclusions he is now giving in the book are because he has 'laid it to his heart' ("I considered in my heart [same Hebrew phrase], in order to declare all this"). Solomon says that faced with death, a wise man [he clearly has himself in view] will consider or lay life to his heart. Ecclesiastes appears to be Solomon's reflections as an old man facing death, rejecting the Divine wisdom he was given as a young man, whilst still holding on to it in some ways. His encounter with his own upcoming death is cited by him as the source of his new wave of wisdom. This spiritual biography of Solomon is recorded for our learning as a unique insight into the deepest psychology of a man who turns away from God's Truth to his own human reflections and meanderings. This is frequently how God in His wisdom teaches us- through the example of failures. This isn't negative psychology- increasingly universities now teach through 'problem based learning'.

:10 Is this Solomon's cynical take on Dt. 4:32, where God challenged Israel to think of the former days and marvel at God's power displayed in them...?

:13 *Made crooked*- S.w. 12:3 about the old man being 'bowed down'. Given the context of death, the idea may be that the effects of the aging process are from God and cannot be undone by man. This would pave the way for the teaching of v. 14, that the nature and extent of our lives and life experiences are all controlled by God and [according to Solomon] we cannot intervene in those

processes.

:14 The Hebrew here is difficult, but the idea may be that we receive from God the right amount of good and evil, so that by the end of our lives there is no need for anything to be added. This would mean that every experience in life is designed by God and is perfectly designed right to the end, so that we have been developed, at least potentially, to the point He wishes.

:15-17 This is exactly the postmodern mindset of our world today- to have no passion, to dip into everything in moderation, to live in the mire of mediocrity.

:16 *Righteous over much*- The Hebrew term occurs only elsewhere in the Proverbs, where Solomon uses it as something to be praised and respected (Prov. 28:28; 29:2,16). But now Solomon despises his desire and respect for wisdom and righteousness, considering that the way of wisdom, as he now saw it, was to be both wise and foolish, to sin a little and be righteous a little. The philosophy of 'balance' he now reached, having a little of both, was in fact how he had lived his life in practice all along. Now in his old age he tries to intellectually and spiritually justify it.

Over wise- The term occurs only once elsewhere in the Old Testament, in Ecc. 2:15, where Solomon recalls that he had made himself "more wise" by asking for wisdom. Now in his cynicism he regrets that request for wisdom which had at the time been so pleasing to God.

:18 ESV: "It is good that you should take hold of this, and from that withhold not your hand, for the one who fears God shall come out from both of them". Solomon here explicitly preaches what he practiced in his life- the 'little of both' syndrome. "The one who fears God shall come out from both of them" could perhaps be paraphrased as meaning 'The truly spiritual person will mature beyond this simplistic understanding of sin and righteousness'. This is new age philosophy- that morality is but a paradigm which the spiritually mature have grown or [supposedly] matured out of.

:19 Verse 20 appears to continue the theme of verses 15-20- and so verse 19 must fit in to that theme, surely. Perhaps the idea is that the truly wise are stronger than any apparently strong people in society- in that, as taught at the end of v. 18, they have matured beyond living by a paradigm of sin and righteousness. Thus Solomon has effectively rejected the wisdom given him by God and come to a new 'wisdom' or a-morality. This would explain the reference to two types of wisdom in :23,24 [see notes there].

:20 This is true but it appears to be using this truth as a justification for downgrading 'sin' to something inevitable, merely part of being human as he has argued in :15-17.

:21 Again, whilst this is true, the implication is that sin is inevitable and that morality or obedience to commandment is not something to overly worry about.

:23 *Far from me*- This was Solomon's problem. The wisdom he asked for and so desired in his youth was given to him, but it was far from him personally- just as God's Truth can be far from the heart of those who find, possess, maintain and teach it today. "Far" can equally well mean 'far away in time', and the Hebrew is translated elsewhere as "long ago" or "of old". He could be saying that it was a long time ago that he had asked to be wise, and now that wisdom was different to the 'wisdom' by

which he had 'proved' that morality is meaningless, sin is inevitable and we can just act as we wish (:15-22; see on :19,24).

:24 *Far off*- s.w. :23 "far [from me]". That which is far off and unobtainable therefore refers to the wisdom which Solomon had asked for and been given in his youth; but he now says that true wisdom is unobtainable by man. He downgraded the concept of truth by saying that ultimate truth cannot be found and therefore the search for it is primitive and meaningless. All we are left to do is to exist for this brief life. This is the end result of continually downplaying 'truth'.

Find it out- David had encouraged Solomon to ask for wisdom and to seek and "find" God (1 Chron. 28:9 s.w.); and so often in Proverbs, Solomon had rejoiced that wisdom *could* be "found" (s.w. Prov. 2:5; 3:13 "happy is the man who finds wisdom"; 4:22; 8:9,12,17,35; 24:14). But now Solomon considers that ultimate wisdom cannot be "found", but rather he feels he has "found" [s.w.] the wisdom of meaninglessness by his own personal reflections (s.w. :26,27,28). Here again we see the two different types of 'wisdom' and 'finding' which Solomon has in view (see on :23).

:25 *To seek out wisdom*- See on :19,23,24. God had given Solomon wisdom- as a pure gift. But now he has rejected that and is trying to search out 'wisdom' for himself- and coming to wrong conclusions. So many who were given God's wisdom in their youth have made the same error.

:27 *Counting one by one*- The original could imply 'experiencing one thing after another', i.e. the things he lists in chapter 2, following every whim and passion of the flesh to see where it leads. Instead of accepting God's revealed wisdom, he proudly decided to try to work it all out for himself. This is effectively what everyone does who rejects God's revealed word in the Bible.

7:26 Solomon was evidently fascinated by Samson. His writings contain many allusions to him. Thus he speaks of how he found " more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares, and her hands as bands (" fetters" , RSV): whoso pleaseth God shall escape her; but the sinner shall be taken by her" (Ecc. 7:26). His constant warnings about the danger of the Gentile (AV " strange") woman are all commands to learn from the example of Samson. All these passages allude to Samson (e.g. Prov. 5:20; 6:26-28; 7:21-27). Often the Proverbs allude to characters in Israel's history. The references to a wise son rejoicing his father and mother (Prov. 23:25) and saddening them by his folly shout for application to Samson. The warnings about not *looking* at a strange woman recall how Samson *saw* the Philistine girl in Timnath and the prostitute in Gaza (Jud. 14:1; 16:1).

:27 *Counting one by one*- The original could imply 'experiencing one thing after another', i.e. the things he lists in chapter 2, following every whim and passion of the flesh to see where it leads. Instead of accepting God's revealed wisdom, he proudly decided to try to work it all out for himself. This is effectively what everyone does who rejects God's revealed word in the Bible.

"All men" in Ecc. 9:11 in the context seems to mean "all men" literally- it does in Ecc. 3:20 and other 'mortality of man' passages. It is impossible that time and chance in the sense of events in our lives should happen by random to believers, without any control of God. Do "all things work together for

good" to us, or only some things? "Time and chance" is probably a Hebraism for death- whether wise (spiritually) or strong or swift, the same thing, "time and chance", happens to all; i. e. death. Ecc. 9:12 backs this up: "For man also knoweth not his time (i. e. of death). . as the birds that are caught in the snare (i. e. killed); so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them". The context back in v. 4,5 is clearly talking about the universality of death. "Chance" does not mean 'random' or uncontrolled events. The Hebrew root by contrast implies something specifically ordained- often by God.

There is evidently a hierarchy amongst the Angels as there will be among us in the age to come. It is interesting to see how the Angels relate to each other, and how their actions complement each other in order to bring about the trials of our lives. Once we grasp this idea, we can try to analyse the Angelic action in our lives and imagine all the different parts played by various Angels to bring it about. This system is maybe hinted at in Ecc. 5:8, where the hierarchy of corrupt human rulers and judges is contrasted with the righteous hierarchy of Heaven: "If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgement and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the high ones (A. V. "highest" is plural) regardeth; and there be higher than they" (the high ones). Thus:

- The Most High One
- The Higher than the High Ones
- The High Ones

The "high ones" referring to Angels, it may be that the phrase "Most High" also refers sometimes to God manifested through an Angel who is higher than all the others, perhaps foreshadowing Christ, who was also made higher than the Angels.

12:7 See on Dan. 5:23

There is an undoubted connection between the record of Samson *catching* the *foxes* and using them to destroy *vineyards* (Jud. 15:4,5) and Song 2:15, where Solomon suggests that he and his girl go and catch the foxes that destroy the vineyards. He seems to have had Samson in mind. And yet both he and his Gentile girlfriend owned vineyards (Song 1:6; 8:11,12), and both were concerned that the fruit would not be damaged (Song 2:13,15; 6:11; 7:12). However, the implication from Solomon's maybe careless allusion was that in fact he was in the position of the Philistines, worrying about the effect of Samson's foxes. See on Ecc. 7:26

8:6 God's word is to be the seal upon our heart:

Deuteronomy 11:18	Song 8:6
"Lay up these words in your heart	"Set me (the bridegroom, Jesus, the Word) as a
. . . and bind them for a sign upon (thee)"	seal upon thine heart"
"Bind (these words) for a sign upon your hand".	"A seal upon thine arm"

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Song 2:1 Chapter 1 has closed with the couple in Solomon's palace, but now she seems despondent and considers herself just a common lily. Her dislike of the city life was not because she was a country girl- she was a "prince's daughter", daughter of Pharaoh. She didn't like it because the 'daughters of Jerusalem' were there, her competitors.

:1 *Lily*- It can be no accident that the Lord contrasts the lily favourably with Solomon in all his glory- as if He saw this girl as far better than Solomon. This is one of many NT allusions which present Solomon unfavourably.

2:2 Solomon comforts her that he sees her as unique and special. This is what is hard to believe in love- that I am unique and special. And this is our difficulty in accepting the love of Christ for us.

The daughters- Solomon addresses her obsession about "the daughters of Jerusalem" by saying that he sees them as thorns and her as a lily.

2:3 It's hard to imagine what was actually going on in this part of the woman's speech. She speaks of meeting Solomon as a pleasant tree in the forest, then of being with Solomon publically at the banquet house, with a banner of his stated love over her, the ultimate answer to the daughters of Jerusalem whose competition she so feared; and then she is fantasizing about him arousing her with his right hand whilst having his left arm under her head, and then in :8 she hears the voice of Solomon indicating he is running across the mountains towards her. We surely cannot read all these things as descriptions of what actually happened in a short space of time; rather are they her fantasies, her imaginations of her idealized lover- see on :16. If we understand her words as largely the fantasy of imagination, then her whole speeches appear far less confused than if we try to read them as literal statements of what actually happened between the couple.

2:7 *The roes... hinds*- It is no coincidence that she calls Solomon just this in :9. Surely her implication is that the daughters of Jerusalem should get on with their own boyfriends, and not stimulate Solomon away from her.

2:8 *Behold he comes*- Clearly looking forward to the bride of Christ eagerly sensing the imminence of His return, also upon the mountains of Israel. See on :13.

2:9 *Looking through the lattices*- Again the impression of furtiveness, secrecy and a concealed relationship. It's as if he comes to her home as she is looking out for him through the closed window blinds and says 'It's all clear, come with me now, let's dash' (:10). And then at the end of it she has to tell him to "flee" back home at daybreak (:17). Note she is in a "hiding place" (:14) from which Solomon calls her out. The obvious question 'Why all the secrecy?' is clearly because the relationship was illicit and mismatched.

2:10-13 This is reported speech- her hopes of what her lover would say, her fantasy about his words

rather than reality. See on :16.

2:13 The blossoming of the fig tree is associated with the soon coming of the bridegroom, possibly alluded to by the Lord in His Olivet prophecy.

2:14 The desire to 'see your face' and the reference to being hid in a cleft of the rock is very much the language of Moses desiring to see God's face whilst hid in a cleft of the rock. The point is, that Solomon's desire for his illicit girlfriend should've been instead redirected into a desire to meet God in the spirit of Moses.

2:15 *Catch us the foxes, the little foxes*- Keil suggests this is "A vine-dresser's ditty". It could be a cry to the foxes to 'clear off'. But why the fear of foxes? Perhaps this is another call for the potential observers, those who would spoil their tryst, to go away- just as the girl shouts such things in her own mind at the 'daughters of Jerusalem'.

2:15 *Our vineyards*- Their meeting places were in the countryside, and Solomon sees her work as his- he speaks as if they are joint vineyard keepers in 'their' vineyard where they meet. These rural locations for their meetings explain the many rural allusions in the song. She was a "prince's daughter" with whom Solomon secretly met in the countryside. This to my mind is a more fulfilling explanation than the suggestion that the rural allusions mean she was a simple country peasant whom he had fallen in love with.

2:16 *I am his*- Solomon had at least 1000 women in his life and got involved with many of them at the start of his reign- it was her wishful thinking that he had eyes for her only, and those fears were expressed in her angry and aggressive comments to the "daughters of Jerusalem" whom she rightfully feared were her competitors- see on:7. As noted on :3 and :13, much of this relationship was based around being in love with an image of the other, in love with an expectation and imagination, an idealization of the other, rather than with the other as they really were.

2:17 *Flee*- There is always the hint of secrecy, of spending the night together in secret and then running away at dawn. This heightened the sense of immediate attraction, but reflected how the relationship could never ultimately work.

1:1 Some of these kings were generally 'good kings' but the prophecy makes clear that the state of the nation was very weak spiritually and therefore good leadership did not lead to personal spirituality. Hence the appeal is to 'heavens and earth' (1:2), to the ruling classes and also the individual Israelites- an appeal repeated in :10 to "the rulers" and "the people".

1:2 *Nourished and brought up*- That may be a fair translation in the context, but the Hebrew words essentially carry the idea of exaltation- the phrase is translated 'exalt and magnify' in Ez. 31:4; Dan. 11:36 and Ps. 34:3. As Balaam's prophecy made clear, by grace God had given Israel an exalted position- not so much in the eyes of the Gentile world, but in *His* eyes. And Israel abused that by rebelling against the Father who had so loved them.

1:3 *Owner*- Heb. 'his buyer', s.w. 'redeemer'. There should be some intuitive bond between God's redeemed people and God; if there is not, then it is because His people have consciously cast it off.

1:3 *Not consider*- To live the unexamined life, doing whatever feels good and seems immediately right for us, drifting forward on autopilot as in a dream with no real sense of God... is rebellion against Him and calls for judgment of the hardest sort.

1:4 *Nation*- Heb. *goy*, usually used about the Gentiles. When God's people are rejected they are treated as the world.

Laden with iniquity- Sin is the crippling burden. The Lord's appeal to those 'heavy laden' was therefore to sinners to come to Him, and exchange their load for His load (Mt. 11:28). As with the analogy of changing masters, there is no total release from any load whatsoever.

Corrupters- Often Biblical Hebrew uses terms for destruction / condemnation which also refer to the actual sin being committed which warrants such judgment. This is because sin is its own judgment. The Hebrew word used here is an example. Three times in the record of the flood we read that the earth was "corrupt" (Gen. 6:11,12), and four times the same word is used regarding how God would therefore "destroy" the earth (Gen. 6:13,17; 9:11,15). And so any indulgence in sin is in fact an indulgence in condemnation; so that ultimately, all who are finally rejected at the last day are those who have rejected themselves from God.

Turned backward- The same word is used about how idolaters would turn their backs upon their idols in the time of their condemnation (Is. 42:17). The condemned are left in an unbearable limbo- they turned their backs on God, and now turn their backs on the idols of their lives.

1:6- see on Job 2:7.

1:7,8 This describes the Assyrian invasion of Judah at Hezekiah's time, burning the cities until Jerusalem alone was left holding out against them. Note the present tenses- the prophetic word was so sure of fulfillment in the future that it was as if it was already fulfilled.

1:9 *Left us*- The same Hebrew word as in :8, where God "left" Jerusalem as the only city which didn't fall to the Assyrians. But this was by grace. The very existence of the faithful remnant within Jerusalem (centered around Isaiah himself) was by grace, they were "left" by God. In a sense, even spiritual strength is a gift from God. It was due to that remnant that God did not judge Judah as Sodom- even though their rulers were in fact rulers of Sodom (:10). They were Sodom, disobedient Israel were to be judged as Sodom (Dt. 29:23), but were not judged as Sodom because of a remnant- who themselves were preserved by God's grace. We see grace all through this. The one city that was preserved, Jerusalem, was indeed preserved by grace because 1:21 states that she had become a prostitute against God.

1:10 The rebuke of the rulers of Judah at the time of the Assyrian invasion shows that Hezekiah's spiritual decision making was the more commendable, seeing the rest of his committee, his Government, were worthy of such condemnation. Each of her rulers is condemned in :23.

1:13 *The solemn meeting*- Passover? The feast became sin, just as Paul warned the breaking of bread meeting could turn into a drinking of wine to condemnation rather than blessing (1 Cor. 11:23-31).

Is. 1:15 seems relevant to God's method of rejecting prayer through the Angels. "When ye spread forth your hands (in prayer) I will hide Mine eyes (Angels) from you: yea, when ye make many

prayers, I will not hear". God Himself hears and sees all words and actions, including insincere prayer. But He lets Himself be limited through His Angels turning away from being sensitive to some words of prayer. See on Is. 6:7.

1:17 All these sins of omission left them with actual blood on their hands (:15)- through their inaction.

1:18 *Reason together*- A legal term. God and man enter into judgment- and the judge pleads with the guilty to accept forgiveness from Him.

1:25,26- see on Zech. 12:4

At the day of judgment, we will all go through the Moses experience; hiding in the rock in the presence of God's glory (Is. 2:10 cp. Ex. 33:22). And our vision of that glory in the face of the Lord Jesus *even now* should have the same humbling effect.

"The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts (Angels) is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgement but behold oppression" (Is. 5:7). God looking for judgement implies the use of His eyes- the Angels.

5:9- see on 1 Tim. 4:1

It appears from Is. 6:7 that Angels even have the power delegated to them to forgive (through Christ, now) our sins in response to our prayers. The Angels being God's eyes means that they are His sensors to our prayers and thoughts; thus it would be fitting if our prayers went to them first in the process of their presentation to God, although God Himself knows our every thought and word. Naturally it must ever be remembered that there is only one mediator- the Lord Jesus, not Angels (1 Tim. 2:5). The connection between the Angels as God's eyes and His hearing of prayer becomes more relevant once it is realized that to 'find grace in God's sight' (eyes-Angels) is equivalent to saying 'please hear my prayer'- see Gen. 19:19; 32:5; 33:10,15; 34:11- at least in Genesis. This again explains why early believers conceived of God in terms of an Angel, as they would have prayed to the Angel and received the answers and other revelation of God from one. See on Heb. 2:6; Rev. 14:18; 5:8; 8:3,8; 15:8; Is. 1:15; Lk. 1:19; Ps. 20:2; 80:1

6:8 When God asks Isaiah whom He should send out, in a scene reminiscent of the Angelic court of Heaven in 1 Kings 22, Isaiah says "Send me" (Is. 6:8). He wanted to be part of God's way and word. And with us too, we are all in that sense 'apostles', sent ones, in that the word we preach must be identified with us personally. For the Lord's parable speaks of how the Father sends out His servants- us- to invite men and women in to the supper of His Kingdom (Mt. 22:14). See on 9:7.

8:1 *A man's pen*- The Hebrew could imply 'in hieroglyphics' [see Keil & Delitzsch's commentary], clearly understood visually by men (a requirement for all such prophetic work- see Hab. 2:2; 1 Cor. 14:19). It could be that Isaiah is told to draw this on a plaque for all to see, and then when his wife has a child he is told to use this name to name the child. He was told to write on it "Mahershalalhashbaz", not to write 'concerning' or 'about' his future son [as the AV incorrectly states]. It could also be that God was telling Isaiah to give his book of prophecies, or at least the prophecies in these chapters, a title on the scroll. The fact Isaiah's son had the same name would have made him a kind of 'word made flesh', a living reminder of his father's work.

8:3 *Mahershalalhashbaz*- 'Speed the spoil, hasten the prey'. The idea is that whilst Judah refused to repent, they were hastening the threatened judgments upon them; they were as the prey running towards the approaching Assyrian hunter, who was speeding towards them. There is a gap between God's threatened judgments and His fulfilment of them, but that gap can be reduced [or extended] by human behaviour. God therefore said in this context that He was hastening the fulfilment of His word (Jer. 1:12). We can hasten the coming of the day of God (2 Pet. 3), for the elects sake the days shall be shortened, the bridegroom delays, yet the days of Amorite iniquity must still be 'filled up' to the required level before judgment comes... These kinds of verses show that some factors hasten the coming of judgment, others slow it down and delay it. The actual coming of the Lord Jesus will not be on some date which was arbitrarily predetermined, but rather on a day which is the result of some huge equation, considering and correctly weighting every factor in a way which only a Divine being could do.

8:4 *The spoil*- Judah saw Ephraim's spoil going into captivity, and yet Judah had spoiled innocent people but not been spoiled in return (Is. 33:1). Such was God's grace to them.

8:6 *The waters of Shiloah* - The small brook within Jerusalem which Hezekiah used to give water to the faithful remnant within Jerusalem during the Assyrian siege. The New Testament "pool of Siloam" is the Greek name for the pool of Shiloah. The water was "soft", it was an apparently insignificant stream, but represented the spiritual water given in Christ (Jn. 4:10). Ps. 46:4,5 refer to the stream as symbolic of how "God is within" Jerusalem- just as Emmanuel means 'God is with us'.

8:7,8 The Assyrian invader is described as having wings and "glory" (Is. 8:7,8), both of which are terms associated with the Angel-cherubim, seeing that they were ultimately behind the invasion. All that happens on earth is somehow a reflection of, and is reflected in, the situation in the court of Heaven.

8:8 The waters of Euphrates were to rise until only the head of Judah, i.e. Jerusalem, was left uncaptured by the Assyrian invasion. Yet this is the very figure which the Messianic Ps. 69:1 uses in a prediction of Christ's crucifixion. There He was the One, the sufficient remnant, which enabled our salvation- just as Isaiah and Emmanuel had been in Isaiah's time.

8:11- see on 1 Tim. 4:1

:13 The idea is that God's true people should not share the fears of the unbelieving world [of death, financial collapse etc.] but rather fear God. These verses are quoted and applied to us all in 1 Pet. 3:14,15. The idea of not fearing what men fear but rather fearing God is also in Lk. 12:4,5 and Is. 51:12,13. God being a rock of security for His people (:14) is applied to Christ in 1 Pet. 2:8- as if to say that we are indeed in the same situation, tempted to fear the world's fear when all hearts are failing for fear, but our rock is the fact that the Lord Jesus died and rose for us and is coming again for our salvation.

:16 This could be Isaiah's prayer to God for his disciples rather than God's command to Isaiah.

8:18- see on Gen. 33:5

:18 *The children*- Isaiah's disciples? But the reference is more naturally to the children of sign, Immanuel and Mahershalal, and to Shearjashub his other son (Is. 7:3), which means 'a remnant will return'. The 'return' in mind is, I suggest, a spiritual return to God. That son was a "sign" to Judah and in a way, a witness to the mission and message of his father Isaiah. Just as Isaiah's son 'Immanuel' is alluded to in the statement in Is. 8:10 that "God is with us", so the idea of "Shearjashub" is in Is. 10:21,22: "A remnant shall return... to the mighty God". And practically, this found its outworking in Hezekiah's appeal to all Israel to 'return' unto Yahweh (2 Chron. 30:6). Those who responded came to live in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30:10,11)- and thus the promised "sanctuary" was created there. For many in the rest of the land died at the hands of the Assyrians; only those with Isaiah in Jerusalem were preserved. Because they sanctified Yahweh, He was a sanctuary for them (Is. 8:14). This preservation of the remnant in Jerusalem is a theme of Isaiah- it is alluded to in Is. 26:20 which speaks of coming into a place of refuge until the Assyrian invasion was passed: "Come, My people, enter into your rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation is past". Likewise Mahershalalhashbaz was a sign in that his name spoke of the coming judgment which Isaiah preached. The words forming his name are found in Is. 10:2,6 where we read of how Judah were to be prey and spoil for the Assyrian invaders. Emmanuel too was a sign, alluded to by Isaiah in Is. 8:10. He was a sign that God *is* with us. Trinitarians need to note that the child was not "God with us" but the sign that God *is* with us. 2 Chron. 32:7,8 shows how Hezekiah grasped the point, when he twice assures Judah that God *is* with us and they need not fear Assyria. This means that Isaiah and his wife (a "prophetess") and his three sons were perhaps the faithful remnant in Jerusalem alluded to in chapter 1, for whose sakes Jerusalem was spared. A faithful couple with three sons recalls the situation with Noah, for whose sake the 'earth' was spared total destruction, and this would explain the many allusions to the judgment of the flood in Isaiah. Here in chapter 8, the Assyrian invasion is explicitly likened to flood waters, and Is. 54:9 puts it all in so many words: "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you".

Heb. 2:13 applies Isaiah's words here to Jesus, making Isaiah a clear type of Christ, the faithful one by reason of whom Judah were spared from total destruction, as Isaiah 1 began by emphasizing.

There are many references in Isaiah to the Lord-Angel- coming out of His dwelling place in the temple to punish the Assyrians; the sacrifices and prayers made "before the Lord" in the temple were thus made in the presence of this Angel. Such phrases as "The Lord of Hosts (Angels) which dwelleth in Mount Zion" (Is. 8:18) are common. Solomon's dedication of the temple emphasized the fact that God's Name dwelt there-which was carried by the Angel (Ex. 23:20,21), and that His eyes (Angels) were present in the house. Thus a literal Angel dwelt in the temple- see on Ps. 78:60

:20 *Law and testimony*- That which Isaiah taught to his sons and school of prophets (:16), which was no doubt challenged by the false prophets.

No light in them- Keil: "they are a people for whom no morning dawns", perhaps hinting that they have no hope of resurrection to eternity in the Messianic Kingdom. Luther: "If they do not say this, they will not have the morning dawn". Instead v. 22 says they will be sent out into the darkness of

rejection. The members of this court of Heaven have various names- Holy ones (Hos. 12:1; Zech 14:5); spirits (1 Kings 22:21-23; Ps 104:4); messengers/angels (Ps 91:11; 103:20); ministers (Ps 103:21; 104:4); servants (Job 4:18); those on high (Job 21:22); princes (Josh. 5:14; Dan 10:13). Supremely, Is. 9:5 LXX speaks of Messiah as "the Messenger of the Great Council" [*megales boules angelos*].

9:2 *Darkness*-The darkness of the context is that of Is. 8:22- the darkness of condemnation, for the rejected for whom there was 'no dawn' (Is. 8:20 Heb.). We can be condemned in this life and yet still change that verdict- by coming to the light of Christ.

Great light- A reference to the 'great' son of Isaiah who was to be the saving king of Judah (:6). The holy one of Israel within Zion was to be "great" in distinction from the "great" [s.w.] king of Assyria who was as it were the anti-Christ, the opposite number of the "great" one within Zion, with his offers of a fake Kingdom of God (Is. 36:4,13).

9:2 *The shadow of death*- Chapter 8 concluded by speaking of the wicked being sent into the darkness of condemnation (a common figure in Isaiah, e.g. Is. 5:30; 9:19). Those who dwell in the dark shadow of death are therefore those who have been condemned- but for them, the light of Christ arose from despised Galilee and the area around the sea of Galilee (:1- "the sea" surely refers in the context to the sea of Galilee, not the Mediterranean).

9:3 *Not increased their joy* - Hard to square with the reference to their joy which follows. Keil & Delitsch render: "Thou multiplieth the nation, preparest it great joy; they rejoice before Thee like the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they share the spoil". But there was not universal joy in Israel at Christ's birth- the prophecy was a potential possibility, but Israel chose not to fulfil it. The figure of spoil being divided was used by the Lord Jesus to describe His victory over sin and sharing it with those who believe in Him (Mt. 12:29; Col. 2:15; 3:9 Gk.). Israel should have rejoiced in this- but they generally did not.

9:4 The idea of destroying the oppressive burdens recalls Israel's suffering in Egypt (Ex. 2:11), and the reference to Midian's destruction suggests that a small remnant, akin to Gideon's three hundred men, would destroy a far greater military and political power which was dominating Israel. It calls for a military fulfilment, and this surely was the possibility in Isaiah's day. The righteous remnant were to release Judah from domination by the overpowering Assyria. But they did not fully achieve this, and so the prophecy was rescheduled and reapplied to the victory of the Lord Jesus over sin (see on :4). His offer of *His* yoke in place of the *heavy yoke* carried by God's people surely alludes here (Mt. 11:29). And His spiritual victory will have its political and 'military' manifestation at Christ's return and His final liberation of Israel from their Arab oppressors.

9:6 This could be rendered: "And the wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, calls his name Eternal-Father, Prince of Peace..."- as if God gives His own titles to this son, which would fit admirably with what God gave to Jesus on His ascension (Phil. 2:7-11). If it is accepted that in the first instance, the child in view was the child of Isaiah and his wife, then we need not conclude that the titles and

Divine name given to the child imply that he was to be God Himself in person. The failure of the unnamed son of Isaiah to fulfil the intended role meant that the prophecy had fulfilment in Christ- which is in harmony with the interpretation I have offered for the preceding verses of the chapter.

9:6 *Unto us* - See on Is. 8:18. This is surely Isaiah's proclamation concerning his fourth son of sign, born to him and his prophetess wife (8:3). The son may be the same as 'Emmanuel'. Potentially, this son could've been the saving king of Judah. But that child didn't rise up to it, and so the prophecy will have a deferred fulfilment in the Lord Jesus. If Isaiah's disciples are understood as his spiritual children (Is. 8:16 cp. 18), then this spiritual child of Isaiah could refer to Hezekiah. But the child is not named because it failed to fulfil the prophecy.

9:6 Isaiah 9 describes the titles which Jesus was to take (at His ascension- Phil. 2:9 etc.); they include (v. 6) "Mighty God"- 'El Gibbor' (see margin). This phrase is the same as 'Gabriel'. So can we conclude that at His ascension, Jesus took over the role of the Angel Gabriel? Thus until then the Angel Gabriel would have been a type of Jesus, and perhaps His guardian Angel. Maybe this implies that we will take over the role of our guardian Angel when we are glorified. Is. 9:6 also gives Jesus the title 'Wonderful'- which is the name of another Angel (Judges 13:18 mg. ; or is this just another title of the Angel Gabriel?). Thus when Jesus was exalted above the Angels as explained in Heb. 1, Jesus took the names of the Angels as He took those of God Himself.

9:7 We have seen that 1 Kings 22 describes Angels being "sent out" to operationalize God's word / will. Yet we also read of God's word being sent out; He sent a word [of judgment] against Jacob (Is. 9:7); God sent His word and delivered them (Ps. 107:20). Angels were sent out to do those things; yet they are so closely identified with God's word, because they exist to fulfill it. See on Jer. 23:18; Is. 6:8.

9:7 *The increase*- The Kingdom of God will eternally increase, just as the little stone of Daniel 2 keeps expanding over the earth. It may imply that God's rulership over us will eternally increase, or that we will eternally be involved in expanding and increasing His Kingship [or Kingdom] over other entities, perhaps in the natural creation, or further throughout the infinite cosmos. Whatever, the essence of wanting to extend His Kingdom / Kingship should be programmatic for our lives now, in pastoral care, exhortation, encouragement and preaching work- as well as progressively submitting ourselves to His rulership. For this extension of His Kingship is what we shall spend eternity doing.

From henceforth even for ever- This eternal Kingdom was intended to start in Isaiah's time, through the work of his son (either his literal son, or his spiritual son / disciple Hezekiah). But it didn't- although the possibility and intention was there. Again, we conclude that the establishment of the eternal Kingdom was rescheduled for fulfilment in the Lord Jesus, the One who lived up to all God's hopes and prophetic expectations.

9:7 *Judgment and justice*- David did just this (2 Sam. 8:15; 1 Chron. 18:14), and yet David said that it was *God* who executed judgment and justice (Ps. 99:4; 103:6). The idea is that the throne of David, i.e. the Davidic Kingdom, was to be restored- with God reigning through and manifested in the Messianic King, just as He had been in and through David in the past.

9:7 *The zeal*- s.w. jealousy, envy. God's motivation was not because Judah were righteous but because He was jealous for His beloved but wayward people.

9:11,12 Is. 9:11,12 suggests that the Rezin, the king of Syria, would have enemies who would unite against him (perhaps a reference to the latter day uniting of rebel factions against the Syrian regime), and yet at the same time would join with the Philistines (Palestinians) to be as the jaw of a beast closing upon Israel: "The LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together; the Syrians before, and the Philistines behind shall devour Israel with open mouth".

9:12 *Hand is stretched out still*- Isaiah later uses this figure to describe how God stretches out His hand in appeal for repentance (Is. 65:2). As Emil Brunner observed, "the wrath of God is the love of God". His anger did not turn away exactly because it was His arm stretched out in appeal for Israel's repentance. The smiting of Israel by God's hand was in order that they might turn to Him (:13)- it was not any kind of vindictive anger. Our actions typically have only one or two functions, whereas God is the God of boundless function. His words and actions therefore have multiple intentions and fulfilments- a feature often hard for us to comprehend.

9:13 *Him that smites*- God was the one behind all Judah's enemies. His hand was and still is stretched out against Israel until they turn to Him, which is why the end of Judah's final woes at the hand of her Arab enemies will be only when they turn to God in accepting His Son. His hand is stretched out against them *for* they do not turn unto Him (God) who smites them.

9:14 *Head and tail*- Both the leadership and the ordinary people were equally guilty, as 9:16 says in so many words, and as Isaiah opened his prophecy in chapter 1 by declaring, in his appeal to both the heavens and the earth. Following bad leadership is not, therefore, any mitigation for the sins committed by ordinary, misled people. Verse 17 is chilling in this connection- widows and young orphans were all counted as equally guilty and were not spared. Even though God in other contexts is very much the defender of the widows and orphans.

9:15 *The prophet that teaches lies*- The false prophets of the last days in Israel were around in Isaiah's time. His ministry was not without serious opposition from amongst his own people.

9:17 *Every one*- Isaiah and Hezekiah were alone in their faithfulness to Yahweh. The salvation of Jerusalem is explained in Isaiah 1 as only because of the existence of a faithful remnant, and that remnant was basically just Isaiah's family. Isaiah 1 and other chapters emphasize the total apostasy of Judah at this time.

9:17 See on :14. Their 'evil doing' was likely in not saying anything. As has been so often observed by those who have suffered from oppressive regimes, it is the silent majority who quietly tut-tut but do not oppose and thereby enable evil, who are in fact the most guilty.

9:18 *Wickedness burns*- The actual sin of the people is spoken of as the fire of judgment. Sin *is* condemnation. To choose to sin is to choose to live out condemnation and apply it to ourselves. The essence of final judgment is therefore going on right now in our behaviour.

Briers and thorns... thickets of the forest- The idea is that the fire spreads from individual thorn bushes and brambles to consume whole thickets of trees. Perhaps the idea is that individual apostasy called for individual judgment, but this spread to the whole nation. Not by any 'guilt by association', but insofar as personal example comes to influence the whole group.

10:3 This is one of the passages which speak of God "coming down" through the Angels, e. g. at Babel, if the Angels physically descend to earth to implement God's will and manifest Him to men. The idea of God "visiting" His people through an Angel also takes on a literal element- thus Isaiah 10:3 speaks of the "day of visitation" in the context of God's destruction of the Assyrian hosts through His Angel. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfill their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

Is. 10 speaks of the same "day of visitation"- not just on Israel but on the hearts of the Assyrians to effect that punishment: "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger. . I will send him against a hypocritical nation. . . I will give him a charge to take the spoil. . howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few" (Is. 10:3,5-7). Thus it was in his heart to punish Israel and other nations; "howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so". It therefore follows that the Angels must have put the thought into his heart, as of himself he did not think that way. The rest of Isaiah 10 has much Angelic language. Several times it is explained that because Assyria thought he had got success because of his own hand, he would be punished; implying he should have recognized that it was God's hand that enabled his success. The hand of God is Angelic language. Because of their pride in their own achievement, as they thought, it was "as if the rod should shake itself against them (the Angels) that lift it up" (v. 15). "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts (Angels), send among the fat ones leanness; and under his glory He shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire (this is Angel-cherubim language). And the light of Israel shall be for a fire (referring back to the Angel in the wilderness giving light in the night due to the fire in which He dwelt), and his Holy One (Angelic language) for a flame"(v. 16,17). The Angels are made "a flame of fire" (Ps. 104:4). There follow a further four references to the "God of Hosts" in Isaiah 10, along with "the God of Jacob" and the "Holy One" again.

11:11,15- see on Zech. 12:4

Isaiah 13 concerning the fall of Babylon is more relevant to the destruction of Sennacherib's Assyrian army in Hezekiah's time, 'Assyria' and 'Babylon' being at time interchangeable terms. Thus we read in v. 3,4 of the Angels coming against Israel in judgement, and mustering the Assyrian armies against Jerusalem: " I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones for Mine anger, even them that rejoice in My highness. . the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land... the Lord of hosts (Angels) mustereth the host of the battle". Yet we clearly read elsewhere that "the Angel of the Lord" went out and smote the Assyrians. So we have some Angels sent with a mission to bring the Assyrians there and others sent to destroy them. Other Angels are actually described as the armies themselves, the weapons of indignation against the land of Israel. And

another Angel 'destroys' them. So here we have the wondrous ways of God, absolute unity in absolute diversity.

Is. 13 describes God's "sanctified ones. . . My mighty ones. . . that rejoice in My highness" as being "the Lord of Hosts (of Angels) mustering the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of Heaven, even the Lord" (Is. 13:3-5). Despite the primary reference to the Persians, these verses have so much Angelic language that they must refer to the work of the Angels behind whatever human instruments they use to bring about the gathering to Armageddon. The Angels are again identified so closely with those on earth that they represent- as in the case of Job's Satan. That Is. 13 concerns the last days is shown by the many links here with Joel's prophecy; v. 8,10 with Luke 21; and v. 16 with Dt. 28, to list just a few.

14:13 - see on Rev. 1:20.

Is. 16

16:1 *Sela* - Petra. This verse seems to be an appeal for Moab to repent and send an offering to Mount Zion, the temple. This was in order to avert the judgment coming upon them, which is spoken of as sure to come ("for it shall be...", v. 2). God's word was able to be fulfilled or not, according to human repentance.

To the ruler of the land- Moab were to accept that they were living in the land promised to Abraham and were only allowed there in God's Kingdom by grace. Under David they had given him tribute (2 Sam. 8:2), and the tribute they paid to later kings of Israel was in lambs (2 Kings 3:4), so we can assume they sent their tribute to David in the form of lambs; they were being asked to accept that the throne of David had been re-established (see on :5). This tribute was to be given "from Selah to the wilderness", from the frontier city to the other side of the country. The whole of Moab was to accept from the heart that they were living by grace in the territory of God's Kingdom and to give tribute to the Messiah King of Israel, recognizing that Israel's God was ruler of the whole land / earth.

16:4 *Let My outcasts dwell with you, Moab-* The Hebrew is obscure, and we note the term 'outcasts' occurs in :3 also. The NIV, ESV and other versions suggest the idea is that the Moabite outcasts should be allowed to dwell in Israel, as if in expectation that some (the Moabite 'remnant' of v. 14?) would respond to the call of Moab to repentance and would want to become part of the covenant people- and they were to be accepted: "Let the outcasts of Moab sojourn among you" (ESV). This certainly makes most sense in the context. The prophecy is about Moab and the possibility of Moab's repentance at the time of Judah's restoration; to suddenly start talking about the outcasts of Israel would be out of context in the chapter. It was David who was famed for letting the outcasts come and dwell with him (s.w. 2 Sam. 14:13,14), so this could be another hint that Moab were to accept the grace of a Davidic king in Israel (see on 16:1). The double appeal for Israel to let the outcasts of Moab dwell amongst them was perhaps because God had earlier said that Moabites were not to enter into the Israelite congregation (Dt. 23:3). God emphasizes that they are *His* outcasts. By grace, foreseeing Moab's awful judgment, He urges Israel to accept repentant Moab amongst them. This all goes to show that in wrath He remembers mercy, and at the time of judging others His dominant emotion is concern for them- and He truly has tried all possible ways to avert the tragedy.

16:5 It was possible, and envisaged by Isaiah, that a Messianic King would sit upon the re-established throne of David and would provide safety and salvation to the Gentile world who wished to accept Him. This didn't happen in his time, but the potential was there- in the same way as his son of chapter 9 could have been a Messiah King with an eternal Kingdom in Israel.

16:9 *I will bewail*- Isaiah was to weep for Moab, even though Moab wept for herself (:7). He so believed the prophecy about Moab and like God, took no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

16:10 *I have made*- The context is of Isaiah speaking (:11). He realized the power of the words he was uttering.

16:11 *My inward parts*- The very core of Isaiah's being wept for his national enemies, so sure was he that the words flowing from his tongue and pen were true. And yet Isaiah was speaking on God's behalf, for it was God ultimately who brought the judgments (:10), and so Isaiah's weeping over Moab's impenitence was in fact God's weeping. He is not indifferent to the billions who have refused His offer of repentance and salvation.

16:13 *Long ago*- But surely not that long ago- the prophecy against Moab was in chapter 15. But the three years grace, the gap between statement and fulfilment, was a relatively long time in the sense that God was allowing for repentance when repentance had already been refused by Moab. Or the 'long ago' prophecy could be Balaam's in Num. 24:17. All that time, Moab had had the opportunity to repent and make history work out a different way to that prophesied. But still they would not.

16:14 *As the years of an hireling*- Perhaps the sense is that as a hired hand counts the days of required service exactly, so this calamity would happen within exactly three years.

Isaiah 19:13,14 says that the princes of Zoan were become fools because of the "perverse spirit" the LORD had mingled in their hearts- presumably through the work of His Angels, seeing that God makes His Angels spirits. Through the work of the Angels God can work directly on men's hearts, and sometimes he does send an "evil spirit" (an "Angel of evil"?) on us, like He did to Saul, which temptations we must spiritually battle against to overcome. See on Ez. 14:9

There are indications that the Angels will still have a distinct role in the Kingdom. Isaiah 19:18 describes the cities of Egypt swearing "to the Lord of Hosts" when Egypt and Assyria will be blessed by "the Lord of Hosts" (v. 25). If these "Hosts" are redeemed saints, one would expect the name Yahweh Elohim to be used. Similarly, every man shall sit "under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for (because) the mouth of the Lord of Hosts (Angels) hath spoken" (Micah 4:4)- i. e. because of the Angels' instituting the Kingdom, none can oppose it. And it may be possible that when "all people will walk every one in the name of his God" (v. 5), their personal 'god' may be an Angel.

Esau's desperate pleading for Jacob's pottage at the cost of his birthright seems to be the background for 1 Cor. 15:32, where those without the hope of covenant resurrection are described as saying "Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die", just as the faithless in Israel did in Hezekiah's time. Instead of weeping in repentance, their attitude was "let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we

shall die" (Is. 22:13). This category is associated with Esau, craving for the things of today at the cost of an eternal tomorrow.

God gave a prophecy about Tyre the generation before Judah went into exile for 70 years. He said that Tyre would be forgotten for 70 years and then would be visited by Yahweh and revived (Is. 23:17). Surely this was in order to prepare those who had ears to hear to the fact that if God could operate like this with Tyre, how much more could He revive and "visit" His beloved people after 70 years.

Israel are often called 'Jacob' in passages concerning idolatry. The historical Jacob and idolatry go together. Thus " By this therefore shall the sin of Jacob be purged; when he (not 'they') maketh all the stones of the (pagan) altar as chalkstone...the groves and images shall not stand up" (Is. 27:9).

Is. 28:1,4 speak of "the drunkards of Ephraim" as a "fading flower", and yet Is. 40:6-8 describe all of humanity with the very same language. In spiritual terms, alcoholics are the epitome of us all in our unredeemed state.

28:22 consumption – see on Rom. 9:28,29

30:21- see on Gen. 18:19

Is. 30:31- see on 2 Chron. 32:21.

The deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army is often attributed to the work of the Angels. The gathering of the Angels together to do this is likened to shepherds being rallied from different parts of the moor or from their various houses to come and frighten off a lion attacking the flock. Thus the idea of a hasty, physical moving together is conveyed: "Like as the lion (Assyria) and the young lion roaring on his prey (Jerusalem), when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him. . so shall the LORD of hosts (a common title for God manifested in the Angels) come down to fight for Mount Zion. . as birds flying (i. e. gathering together and moving together), so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem" (Is. 31:4,5). It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

At the coming of Christ the responsible will be gathered to judgement at Jerusalem. The plain Biblical evidence for this is too hard to go against. With Hezekiah in Jerusalem were "the sinners in Zion" (Is. 33:14), who would equate with the unworthy who are also gathered into Jerusalem. It is largely through the Angels that the judgement is ministered; and so it was in Hezekiah's time. In the context of describing the punishment of these "sinners in Zion" we read: "The Lord will come with fire, and with His (Angel) chariots like a whirlwind (Angelic language), to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire". This is alluded to (quoted?) in 2 Thess. 1:7,8 concerning the Angelic punishment of the unworthy at the judgement: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty Angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance. . ". That those punished are renegade saints who "know not God (any longer), and that obey not the Gospel" is evident from the fact that they are punished "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power". In common with much of Thessalonians, Paul is alluding back to Matthew 24 and 25, here to the passage in 25:31-34 regarding the responsible being gathered to the judgement before "the throne

of His glory". Only the responsible come into the personal presence of Christ. The description of the judgement in Jude 24 chimes in too: "The presence of His glory".

Our eyes shall "behold the land that is very far off" (Is. 33:17) just as Moses had been given the vision of the promised land far off. See on Jn. 3:3,5

35:3,4- see on Job 4:3-5

Rabshakeh retreated from Jerusalem because God "put a spirit in him" (Is. 37:7 RV). The AV has: "I will send a blast / spirit upon him". Was it not that the Angel who later destroyed him came upon him and put a spirit / disposition of mind within him that made him want to retreat?

Isaiah 37 is shot through with allusions to the Angel cherubim destroying the Assyrian host. The Angel went forth (v. 36)- perhaps referring to Him physically going forth out of the temple where He dwelt to slay the Assyrians outside the walls of Jerusalem. This phrase 'went out' is nearly always used about literal physical movement, which we have seen is what Angels literally do. Thus in the Ezekiel visions of the cherubim, they and the lightnings "went forth", physically and literally, in performing God's work. "Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence (Angelic language); let Thine eyes (Angels) behold the things that are equal", seeing they are involved with the 'coming forth', according to the parallelism of this verse. Similarly Job's satan Angel "went forth" from the presence of the Lord (Job 1:12). And so it happened that there were Angels on earth, as it were. Zech. 2:3 also has an Angel going forth to answer the prayers concerning restoring the fortunes of Jerusalem (see Zech. 5:5 too). Ps. 81:5 describes the Angel going out through the land of Egypt in order to "remove (Israel's) shoulder from the burden". Ps. 81 is 'Angelic', following Ps. 80, which is another such Psalm. Heb. 1:14 also offers support: the Angels are "sent forth" to minister to us- by answering prayers?

Hezekiah saw Jacob's watershed experience that night of wrestling as analogous to his own experience during his sickness: " I reckoned till morning, that as a lion he would break all my bones (cp. Esau's approach)...I shall go softly (cp. " I will lead on softly" , Gen. 33:14)...for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Is. 38:13). Tragically, Hezekiah didn't keep Jacob as his hero. He succumbed to the very materialism which Jacob permanently rejected that night.

There are a number of passages which associate Job with Israel in general terms. It has been suggested that the book of Job was re-written and compiled by Hezekiah's men who at the same time produced the Psalter (all under inspiration, of course). The copious connections between the suffering servant prophecies of Isaiah and the book of Job (take a glance down the A.V. margins of Job) are therefore more easily understandable- the account of Job's sufferings and vindication amidst opposition was framed in language that pointed forward to the similar suffering (through the same disease?) and vindication of Hezekiah. The suffering servant of Isaiah refers to both Israel and the Lord Jesus, exactly as the parable of Job also does. The connections between Isaiah 40 and the book of Job are especially marked:

Isaiah 40

Job

:14	21:22
:17	6:18
:22	9:8
:23	12:21
:24	14:8
:26	25:3
:27	3:23
:31	29:20

40:1 Comfort- see on Zech. 1:13

40:2- see on Job 7:1

40:3,4 "Prepare ye the way... make straight in the desert a highway. . . the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain" is similar to Is. 45:1,2,13 "Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus. . I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. . . I will make straight all his ways. . he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives". The preparation for the restoration in Is. 45 becomes a type of the preparation of the way to Christ.

40:7 See on Mt. 6:26

The link between Is.40:27 and Job 3:23 is most significant: " Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is passed over from my God?" . These are the words of Job in 3:23: " Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?" . Thus Job represents Israel; and because " Israel" in Isaiah also refers to our Lord, we can make the equation Job=Israel=Jesus. The distancing between himself and God which Christ felt on the cross (Mt.27:46) is thus foreshadowed by Job feeling the same- and like Christ, it was a trial from God, not a specific punishment for sin.

40:29 "He giveth power to the faint"- very relevant to the great physical effort that had to be made by the handfull who first set about the rebuilding.

41:6,7 "They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith. . . ". This refers to the different types of people working together to build Jerusalem. Where exactly does this fit in to the Hezekiah context?

Is. 41:9 is quoted in Heb. 2:10,14 about God taking hold of Jesus, His servant. Is. 41:10 continues concerning Jesus, therefore, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee (the Angels' words to Joshua); be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (an Angel). The right hand Angel of God strengthened, upheld and helped Jesus spiritually. His dismay which the verse implies He had was therefore at His feeling of being spiritually inadequate to fulfil His great calling- exactly like Joshua. But as with Joshua, the Angel strengthened Him.

41:11,12 "All they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: and they that strive with thee shall perish. . . they that war against thee shall be as nothing". The Samaritans provide a clear fulfilment of all this.

41:14 "Fear not. . . ye few men of Israel; I will help thee, saith. . the Holy One of Israel" (AVmg.). The few Jews rebuilding Jerusalem aided by the Angel surely correspond to this.

41:14- see on 44:2

42:19- see on 44:2

43:12 "Thou wilt not call upon me, O Jacob; thou wilt be weary of me. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings"- the same ideas are repeated in Mal. 1:13; 2:17 regarding Israel's state after the restoration.

43:28 "I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary"- put forth "as polluted from the priesthood" (Ezra 2:62).

The way God showed such grace and imputed righteousness to Jacob even before his birth is also brought out in Is. 44:2, which states that from the womb, Jacob was chosen to be God's servant; and yet Jacob coolly said that only if God did what He promised, would he agree to serve Yahweh, and have Him as his master. Earlier in the same servant prophecies, the servant Jacob is described as a useless servant: " Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect (Jacob was a perfect / plain man, Gen. 25:27), and blind as the Lord's servant?" (Is. 42:19). Although the servant is worse than useless (a deaf messenger), he is seen as perfect by his Divine Master. And the servant prophecies are primarily based on Jacob (note, in passing, how often they associate the servant Jacob with idol worship, which seems to have been an earlier characteristic of Jacob). Consider too the allusions to Jacob in Is. 53; a man of sorrow and grief, despised of men, who would see his seed. As Christ felt a worm on the cross (Ps. 22:6), so Jacob is described (Is. 41:14). That even in his weakness, Jacob prefigured the Lord in his time of ultimate spiritual victory, shows in itself the way God imputed righteousness to him at the time.

" One shall say, I am Yahweh's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto Yahweh, and surname himself by the name of Israel" (Is. 44:5). The Name of Jacob / Israel is paralleled with Yahweh. Remember how Jacob in his doubt promised God: " If God will be with me...then shall Yahweh be my God" (Gen. 28:20,21); and at the end, Yahweh was Jacob's God. God seems to recognize this by describing Himself as the God of Jacob / Israel so very often. His joy, His sheer delight at Jacob's spiritual achievement is recorded throughout the Bible. The way God describes Himself as " the God of Israel" (201 times) or " the God of Jacob" (25 times) infinitely more times than anyone else's God is proof enough that God saw His relationship with Jacob as very special. " God of Abraham" occurs 17 times; " God of Isaac" 8 times; " God of David" 4 times. Remember that whenever we read " Israel" , we are reading of the man Jacob and his children. That God was the God of mixed-up, struggling Jacob is a sure comfort to every one of us. God is not ashamed to be surnamed the God of Jacob (Heb. 11:16 Gk.).

44:26 "That confirmeth the word of His servant (Jeremiah). . . that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited".

"(God). . . performeth the counsel (humble advice) of His messenger" (Heb. Malak- Angels; Is. 44:26). God is open to persuasion from both Angels and even men.

45:1- see on 40:3,4

45:18 "The Lord that created the Heavens; God Himself that formed the earth. . . He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited". If "the earth" is 'the land' of Israel and "the Heavens" refer to the temple (see 1 Kings 8:30; 2 Chron. 30:27; Ps. 20:2,6; 11:4; Heb. 7:26; 2 Sam. 15:15 etc.) then God is saying that if the temple and land remained uninhabited, His creation of them would be in vain- hence His plan of restoration. The references in Isaiah's prophecies of the restoration to God being the creator of Heaven and earth would therefore be reminders that it was equally in His power to create the new Heavens and earth of the people of Israel/the temple.

46:10 "Declaring the end from the beginning". The emphasis on this (e. g. 41:26) is understandable seeing that such a specific prophecy regarding the 70 years captivity was to be given and fulfilled.

48:7- see on Eph. 1:9,10

Isaiah 48:18,19: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river...thy seed also had been as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof". The promises to Abraham and the coming of the Messianic seed of Abraham could have been fulfilled; but because Israel chose to be wicked, there was no such peace: "There is no peace...unto the wicked" (Isaiah 48:22).

It would appear from Is. 49:2 that Jesus was protected and specially guided by the Angel in the first thirty years of his life: "In the shadow of His hand (an Angelic phrase) hath He hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He hid me". The word 'quiver' comes from the word for an astrologer, in the sense of being something that conceals knowledge. Thus the Angel hid the true identity of Jesus, so that "flesh and blood" alone could not recognize that He was God's Son (Mt. 16:13-17). We have seen that "the Lord" that passed by Moses and hid him with his hand in the cleft of the rock was an Angel.

49:4 "My reward is with my God"- cp. "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Neh. 13:31; "my God" is a common theme in Ezra and Nehemiah).

49:16 "Thy (broken down) walls are continually before me"- relevant to the restoration.

49:21- see on Gen. 33:5

50:10 "Who is among you that feareth the Lord. . . his God?" cp. Ezra 1:3.

51:7 "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings"- the Samaritans.

The arm of the Lord- a title of Christ- is described as awaking (cp. Christ's resurrection), and as being "It which hath dried the (Red) Sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made a way for the ransomed to pass over" (Is. 51:9,10). This is describing the work of Christ in language applicable to the Angel of the Exodus who brought Israel through the Red Sea.

There is Angelic reference here: "The Lord of Hosts (of Angels) is His Name. . . I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand (an Angelic phrase- for the Angel hid Moses in the shadow of His hand), that I may. . . say unto Zion, Thou art My people" (Is. 51:15,16).

52:12 "Ye shall not go out (from Babylon) with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord (Angel) will go before you", so that they went with the King's blessing and not in panic.

52:14- see on Gen. 39:6; Job 17:7,8

53:6 - see on Lk. 15:4-6.

53:8- see on Ex. 32:32

53:9- see on Dt. 34:6

It seems to me that in some sense the Lord Jesus had a vision of us in the Kingdom just before his death (Is. 53:10; Heb. 12:2; Ps. 22:17,20 cp. Eph. 5:30).

54:5 "The Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth"- a phrase used in Zechariah regarding the Angel co-ordinating the restoration.

54:6 see on Zech. 11:10,11

54:7,6 "For a small moment (70 years) have I forsaken thee. . . as a woman forsaken. . . and a wife. . . refused"- cp. our comments showing that it was the Angel who married Israel, becoming 'The God of Israel', and then forsook her.

As the Jews of Hezekiah's time went out of Jerusalem to a revitalized land and started to receive the tribute of the surrounding nations (the primary application of Isaiah's Kingdom prophecies), so the saints will pour forth from Jerusalem to establish the Kingdom worldwide. "Ye shall go out (from Jerusalem) with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing. . ." (Is. 55:12). After the surrounding of Christ in Jerusalem and the defeat of Gog, Ps. 2 describes the establishment of the Kingdom worldwide: "I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance. . . kiss the son, lest He be angry. . ." (v. 8,12).

56:2,5 "Blessed is the man. . . that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it. . . unto them will I give in Mine house and within My (rebuilt) walls a place. . .". There was a problem with Sabbath abuse during the restoration.

57:2 - see on Rev. 21:12

57:19 "Peace to him that is far off (in Babylon), and to him that is near" (in the land).

58:12 "Build the old waste places. . . raise up the foundations. . . and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (and 58:13=Neh. 13:22).

59:16- see on Ex. 2:11,12

Is.59:16,17- cp. David's shunning of such physical armour for its spiritual counterpart. Is there a conscious allusion to David and Goliath here? See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

A connection between Joshua and Israel is developed in Is. 59:21, which describes the new covenant which God will make with Israel in the Messianic Kingdom in terms evidently reminiscent of Joshua- as if the new covenant was made with him, thereby enabling him potentially to be part of a Messianic Kingdom even in his day: "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: my Spirit that is upon thee ["Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him" Dt. 34:9; Num. 27:18-23] , and my words which I have put in thy mouth [Dt. 18:18- God's words were put in Joshua's mouth], shall not depart out of thy mouth ["this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth", Josh. 1:8, s.w.], nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever". See on Josh. 1:6

Our prayers are to give the Father no " rest" (Is. 62:7), no cessation from violent warfare (Strong).

63:4-6- see on Ex. 2:11,12

The natural Jews in Jerusalem will mirror those in Hezekiah's time exactly- they will have experienced the humiliation of past defeats, will be prone to the taunts of the invaders about not trusting in their unproven Messiah (as they were taunted about Hezekiah), and they will be torn between the temptation of capitulating to the offers of a part in a new communist state of Israel (cp. Is. 36:16,17 and the Assyrian policy for conquered areas), and having total faith in Christ. Due to the spiritual effect of their previous trials at the hands of the Arabs (Zech. 13:8,9), they will make the right decision. The description in Is. 63 of the natural Jews looking warily out of Jerusalem to the saviour Angel coming to save them now falls into place. The saviour that comes up from fighting in Edom and Bozrah, having judged (the figure of the winepress, Is.63:3) both the saints and the enemies of the Jews, is defined in v. 8-13 as the Angel that led Israel through the wilderness. In the same way as the Angel's kindness and unjustified love at that time was so glorious, so Is. 63 captures the same spirit of supreme thankfulness that will be amongst the Jews as they witness such great salvation yet again.

The Angel with Israel in the wilderness initially thought "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie" (Is. 63:8)- but found Himself mistaken to some extent after testing them.

The Angels' manifestation of God is so great that they are called "the Angel of His presence" (Is. 63:9); whilst concerning the same Angel going with Israel through the wilderness we are told "My presence shall go with thee" (Ex. 33:14). Thus when Adam and Eve "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8) they were hiding from the Angel

walking in the garden. The language certainly implies that the Lord God was walking around in a personal form and eventually confronted them face to face.

There even seems to be the suggestion that Angels have the capacity to forget. In Is. 63 we read of the Angel of the presence that went with Israel through the wilderness, and of His subsequent thoughts: "They rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit (the "Angel of His presence"): therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He (the Angel) remembered the days of old, Moses and His people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the Sea. . . that led them through the seep. . . the Spirit of the Lord (an Angel) caused him (Moses) to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people" (vv. 10-14). This shows the Angel looking back to the days when He led them through the wilderness, and in wrath remembering mercy. "Where is He that brought them up. . ." He asked- it was the same Angel which is speaking who brought them up. So the Angel was remembering His former manifestation of God as He brought them up from Egypt, and deciding to go back to the attitude towards the people which He had then. This again shows the place of pity and emotion in affecting Angelic decisions, although all under the over-ruling hand of God Himself.

Isaiah 63:10 describes the work of the Holy Spirit Angel with regard to punishing Israel in language which hints at the flood: "It repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth (land), and it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6) connects with "They rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit (cp. grieved at the heart): therefore He was turned to be their enemy (cp. "repented"), and He fought against them". 2 Peter 3:6,7; Mt. 24:37 and Dan. 9:26 (an impressive trio) say that the flood is a type of God's judgement of the earth at the second coming- and we know that Jesus will come with His Angels with Him to do this, in the same way as the Angels were prominent in this earlier "coming" of the Lord at the flood.

God (in the Angel of the presence) "was turned to be (Israel's) enemy" because of their sin (Is. 63:10)- likewise Job complains that his satan-Angel has " turned to be cruel to me" (30:21 AVmg.).

63:10- see on Jn. 14:26,30

See on Gen. 8:1; Josh. 24:17

63:11- see on Ex. 34:27

Israel were led by God's hand (Heb. 8:9; Is. 63:13); but in practice by Moses' hand (Ps. 77:20; Is. 63:12).

63:14- see on Dt. 34:5,6

64:10,11 "Jerusalem a desolation. . . our beautiful house. . . is burned up with fire"- clearly speaking of the restoration

65:11- see on Gen. 49:19

"The sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (65:20). How can this be reconciled with a punishment of the wicked by fire? Is. 65:17-25 is describing the state of the mortal people during the Millennium. The passage makes no reference to the state of the saints. The people are described as being obedient, blessed and righteous. But the fact that some will be rejected at the second judgement at the end of the Millennium shows that not all will be like this; even during the

Millennium the sinner will not receive the blessings of long life, and will be "accursed". Thus there will be a more public divide between the seeds of the woman and serpent, as there was in early times (so Genesis and the nature of the discussion in the book of Job implies). Is. 66:24 concludes that the rejected "shall be an abhorring to all flesh"- the Hebrew text of Dan. 12:2 concerning the punishment of the responsible at judgement suggests some allusion to this: "some to shame and everlasting contempt".

Is. 66:1 rest- see on Ps. 132:8

66:1 "Where is the house that ye build unto me? . . . to this man will I look. . . that. . . trembleth at My word"- as a few did at the restoration (Ezra 9:4; 10:3), although the majority were more concerned with the physical work of the temple than truly responding in the right spirit to God's word.

Similarities with us?

The "sinners in Zion" of Is. 33:14 are described as "the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched" (Is. 66:24). This is quoted in Mk. 9:44 concerning Gehenna, the place of punishment for the unworthy saints. If the judgement is to be at Jerusalem, it would fit into place if the unworthy are punished literally in the physical location of Gehenna. This would make more sense of Christ's repeated allusions to it when talking of the judgement. The repeated reference to fire being used to punish the unworthy (remember the Angels can be made a flaming fire) implies their punishment will be within a defined period of time- probably very short, seeing God has no pleasure in punishing sin- and if fire is to be used, it would be logical if it was in a confined location. A punishment in literal Gehenna fits in.

The Angels watch over our response to the Word, as they do all aspects of our spiritual development. Jeremiah 1:11,12 tells us that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah saying "What seest Thou? And I said I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen; for I will hasten My word to perform it". The word translated 'hasten' means to watch over, and is very similar to the word for 'almond'. Almonds are associated with God's eyes; the bowls of the lampstands were almonds (Ex. 25:33,34). Zech. 4:2 talks about these almond bowls on the candlestick, and v. 10 interprets them as the "eyes of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth". 2 Chron. 16:9 talks about the Angels in the same way; "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him". Similarly in Rev. 4:5 the lamps in the bowls of almond are equated with the "seven spirits (or Angels) of God". Rev. 5:6 equates the seven eyes with the seven spirits. Thus the almond rod which Jeremiah saw represented God's eyes or Angels who would watch over the word of God which Jeremiah was to speak to perform it. See on Dan. 9:14

Jer. 2:19-21 indicates the Angels' surprise at the weaknesses of their charges- "The Lord God of Hosts (Angels). . . broke thy yoke, and burst thy bands (in Egypt); and thou saidst, I will not transgress (Israel's covenant of obedience to the Angel). . . I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a

right seed (done by the Angel, Ps. 80:8; note the angelic context of Ps. 80): how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?"

Consider how within His own law, it was an abomination for a man to re-marry the woman he had divorced. Yet this notwithstanding, God abases Himself in asking worthless Israel to re-marry Him (Dt. 24:4 cp. Jer. 3:1).

4:28 not repent- see on Hos. 13:14

7:25- see on Jer. 23:18,22

It is emphasized in Jer. 10:15, 16 that the God of Jacob is not an idol, nor is He created by an 'errorist'- using the same rare Hebrew word concerning Jacob being a 'deceiver' in Gen. 27:12. Jacob was a 'deceiver', and for much of his life did not accept Yahweh as his God, preferring the idols of the land (28:20,21). Yet Jer. 10:15,16 says that idols are made by 'deceivers', and the God Jacob believed in was not an idol like this. God is almost turning everything upside down to frame a weak, faltering Jacob as the very opposite. And He will do likewise with every one of the true Israel.

The mutuality of inheritance between us and God is commented upon in Jer. 10:16, in the context of Jacob: " The portion of Jacob (i.e. God, the inheritance of Jacob) is not like them...Israel is the rod of his inheritance; Yahweh of Hosts is His Name" . This is yet another reflection of God's recognition that finally, Jacob fulfilled his promise to make Yahweh his God (Gen. 28:20). The lessons of Jacob's name change were finally learnt.

Jer. 15:6 "Therefore will I stretch out My hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary of repenting". The hand of God is an Angelic term, and here we see it responsible for the frequent repenting (changing of mind) of God concerning Israel. Frequent repentance is fundamentally not a characteristic of God Himself- "God is not a man, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29).

It seems that Jeremiah was one of several later characters who found inspiration in Samson, and alluded to him in their prayers to God, seeing the similarities between his spirit and theirs: " O Yahweh [Samson only used the Yahweh Name at the end of his life], thou knowest: remember me [as Samson asked to be remembered for good, 16:28], and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors [" that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines" , 16:28]...know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke [the Philistines doubtless mocked Yahweh as well as Samson]. Thy words were found, and I did eat them [cp. Samson loving the word and eating the honey which he " found" in the lion]: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart...I sat not in the assembly of the mockers...I sat alone because of thy hand [Samson's separation from an apostate Israel]...why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable?" [the finality of his blindness] (Jer. 15:15-17). If these connections are valid, Samson's love of the word was a very big part of his life.

Jeremiah's message as the Babylonian armies approached Jerusalem had stressed that if the Jews repented, then God would repent of the evil He was planning to bring upon them (18:8,10; 26:3,13).

The Jews did not repent, and so Jerusalem was taken and Zedekiah deported. Even at this thirteenth hour, God said to the Jewish forces that remained at large outside Jerusalem and who were about to flee to Egypt: "If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down. . . for I repent Me of the evil that I have done unto you"" (42:10). What a God we have! Although Israel had not repented, the Angel repented to the extent of changing His pre-requisite for repenting of bringing more evil on them. And so God changed this from returning wholeheartedly to the Law, to merely remaining in the land of Israel rather than fleeing to Egypt. What of us? Jer. 31:18,19 tops all for such encouragement: "Turn thou Me (said Ephraim), and I shall be turned. . . I (God in the Angel) was turned, I repented"- and therefore God repented too!

God describes the word which He inspires as coming into His mind (Jer. 19:5)- as if it occurs to Him, and then He inspires men with it.

20:7- see on Ez. 14:9

23:3 "I will gather the remnant of My flock"- the Angel of Israel is likened to a shepherd in Ps. 80:1; Is. 63:9-11 etc.

23: 4 "I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them"- rulers who would genuinely care for Israel like the master shepherd, the Angel, did. Jeremiah was frequently moved to lament the false shepherds of Israel, which is understandable if the Angel shepherd of Israel inspired Jeremiah. He would have been deeply hurt at his flock being left to ruin by those to whom He had delegated His shepherding role (cp. how in Is. 63:9-11 both the Angel and Moses appear to be the shepherd that led Israel).

23:5 "I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper". Zech. 6:12 interprets this as a reference to Zerubbabel: "the man whose name is the branch. . . shall build the temple of the Lord". Zerubbabel being a king-priest was in the kingly line, and thus can correctly be called a king in the line of David (Matt. 1:12; Lk. 3:7; 'Sheshbazzar' of Ezra 1:8 is the Babylonian equivalent of 'Zerubbabel'; Ezra 3:8 describes his brothers as "priests and Levites"). Great prince Nehemiah humbly entered Jerusalem incognito on an ass (Neh. 2:11-15)- it is a wild speculation that Zerubbabel did the same, and thus provided a primary basis for Zech. 9:9 "Thy king cometh unto thee (also unrecognized, in the case of Jesus entering spiritually ruined Jerusalem). . . lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass".

23:7,8 "They shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them" (primarily fulfilled by the Babylonian policy of scattering their captives among other nations they conquered- hence the existence of the Samaritans in Israel). The Angel brought Israel out of Egypt- and was also responsible for their regathering from Babylon.

23:11 The Babylonian captivity was to be because "in My house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord". The Angel that dwelt in the temple could call it "My house".

23:14 "They are all of them unto Me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah"- both of whom were visited and destroyed by Angels. Similarly the Angels would bring judgement on Jerusalem

In Jer. 23:18,22 we find prophets standing in the "council of the Lord" (RV) to receive His word; and yet this sounds very much like Angels standing in the court of Heaven to receive God's word of command. Likewise note the parallel between an Angel sitting under an oak and a prophetess sitting under an oak (Jud. 4:5 RVmg.; 6:11). "The God of the spirits [Angels] of the prophets sent his Angel" to the prophet John (Rev. 22:6 RV); implying that as God had sent His Angel-Spirits to inspire the prophets, so now He did to John. Ps. 147:15,18 speak of the sending out of God's word to melt snow and send rain; this must surely refer to the Angels being sent out from the court of Heaven to do these things. The way the "watcher and holy one" came down from Heaven is paralleled with the word of Divine command likewise coming down from Heaven (Dan. 4:23,31). The universe is not just ticking away on clockwork; the Angels are actively being sent out from Heaven to perform what may appear the most mundane and repetitious of things. Thus God sends out His Angels; He sends out His word; and He also sent out His prophets (Haggai- Hag. 1:12; Ezekiel- Ez. 3:5,6). God rose up and sent out His prophets (2 Kings 17:13; Jer. 7:25 and many others). He is described as doing this because those prophets likewise identified with the word and became part of their own message. See on Is. 9:7; Ez. 10:5

24: 1 "Two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord"; one representing the apostate Jews who remained in the land, and the other those who went to Babylon and later revived spiritually. It seems that an Angel dwelt literally in the temple. This vision of two groups of Jews standing before an Angel is probably the basis of the vision of Zech. 3, where Joshua and the Jews eager to rebuild Jerusalem stand before the Angel, with the satan standing there too. 'Satan' is often associated with apostate Jews in the New Testament.

25:11 "This whole land shall be a desolation". The Angels of Zech. 1:11 reported that "all the earth (land- of Israel) sitteth still and is at rest" (cp. also Jer. 30:10), indicating that they were responsible for the state of the land.

26:3,13- see on 18:8

29: 10 "I will visit you" (God manifestation through the Angels) "after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon". Notice the similarity with the visiting of the Hebrews by the Angel at the Exodus.

The pure grace of God's dealings with Jacob is brought out in how Jer. 30:7,8 prophecies that in the time of Jacob's trouble, "I will break his [the invader's] yoke from off thy neck. This was the promise given to Esau- and one could say that Jacob having got all he did, at least Esau should be allowed to have the little promise given to him. But now even this is given to Jacob- at the time of his 'trouble, his final downtreading for centuries of disobedience.

31:18,19- see on 18:8

31:32 "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt". This covenant was given by the Angel at Sinai. "Which My covenant they break; and should I (therefore) have continued an husband unto them?" (AVmg.). This associates the Angel with marrying Israel, and would explain the passages in Ez. 16,20 and elsewhere which speak of God falling in love with Israel and being flattered by their love. The implication in these passages is that God made an emotional decision in 'proposing' to Israel at Sinai. Such language is far better suited to Angels than to God Himself. The Angel here in v. 32 seems to be

saying that His divorcing Israel would be justified- and as we see later in Hosea, God did divorce Israel. This contradicts- apparently- God's personal abhorrence of divorce. The situation appears less contradictory if it is recognized that the Angels actually divorced Israel, with God looking on and accepting the reason for the Angel's action. Mal. 2:14 brings this out: "The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant". This "wife of thy youth" cannot be God Himself- seeing that He is witnessing between Israel and this other party. It is fitting if she therefore represents the Angel, whom Israel married in her national youth at Sinai, where the Angel made the covenant with Israel to constitute Himself "the wife of thy covenant". It should be remembered that Malachi was prophesying in the same context of the restoration as Jeremiah. The Jeremiah passage shows that just before the captivity God, manifest in the Angel, considered divorcing them, and He thought similarly after the restoration too, according to Malachi. "The God of Israel. . . the Lord of Hosts (Angelic titles) saith that if He hate here, put her away" (AV: "The Lord hateth putting away". The ambiguity here seems designed)). This is the same idea as Jer. 31:32- the Angel saying He would be justified in divorcing Israel, although He did not want to. See on Zech. 1:3

31:33 "I will put My Law in their inward parts". The Law was given by Angels; again, notice the action of Angels on the human heart. The word is soon to be placed in Israel's stony hearts- and the power of the Spirit Angels will be operative in this.

31:33- see on 1 Sam. 10:9

32:39- see on 1 Sam. 10:9

34:18- see on Gen. 15:10.

37:3 *Pray*- But God had three times told Jeremiah not to pray further for the people (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). But Jeremiah knew God well enough to still pray, and God was open enough to dialogue to still answer (:7). Zedekiah was no atheist- he wanted others to pray for him, although he personally would not hear God's word (:1). And he was earnestly interested in knowing whether there was any word from God for him (:17).

37:5 *Tidings*- It seems in essence that this situation will be repeated when the latter day Babylon as "king of the north" invades Israel (Dan. 11:44). Those who learnt anything from Bible history will see the similarity and put their faith in God rather than the hope of human deliverance.

37:8 *Burn it with fire*- The punishment for a whore, which is how Jerusalem had been to God.

:12 *to receive his portion there, in the midst of the people* (RV, ESV, NEV)- Jeremiah had been told to purchase a field, which he would receive at the restoration (Jer. 32:7-9). It seems this was a momentary lack of judgment on his part- he wanted his inheritance right away, rather than waiting for God's time. However, the Hebrew is difficult here. The AV has "to separate himself thence in the midst of the people". It could equally mean that he had had enough of his ministry in Jerusalem and wanted to separate himself from being in the midst of an apostate people. He learnt his lesson- for at the end of his life, when given the choice of the easy life as guest of honour in Babylon or remaining in the ruined land of Judah, he chose to remain with God's people. And finally, when they disobeyed God and chose to flee to Egypt, Jeremiah went with them, to continue appealing to them.

The Hebrew could also mean that he slipped through the gates hiding himself in the midst of the people. Whatever, these three translation options all suggest a not very good decision by Jeremiah. However, it could also be that he was being obedient to God's word- to go out to the Babylonians (Jer. 38:2,18) in recognition of the fact that Judah had sinned and deserved to be dominated by their enemies in accordance with the covenant of Dt. 28. The fact the Chaldeans were in retreat at the time, scared by the Egyptian army (:11), showed all the more faith on Jeremiah's part. But he was not allowed to do this act of faith and obedience by others- and so it can be with us. And yet when arrested, Jeremiah denies he is going to the Chaldeans (:14)- even though he had preached that this is what the Jews should do. So it does seem, however we look at this incident, that Jeremiah acted in momentary weakness.

:17 The 'word' that Zedekiah would be delivered into the hand of the Chaldeans had already been given several times by Jeremiah (Jer. 21:7; 22:25; 32:4; 34:3,21). Perhaps this was no new revelation, but rather Jeremiah reminding Zedekiah of God's word. We can seek some new insight, some new 'word from the Lord'- when actually the answer is staring us in the face in His word which we already know.

:21 The events of chapter 38 show how this assurance was not kept by Zedekiah- a reflection of his powerlessness, as well as the weakness of his character.

42:10- see on 18:8

Jer. 46:17- see on Gen. 18:17

51:1- see on Ex. 12:23

There is a vision described in 1 Kings 22:22 of the Angels presenting their various plans of how to slay Ahab. God says to the one whose plan He accepts "Thou shalt persuade him (Ahab), and prevail also: go forth, and do so". Thus the Angel still has to "prevail" or 'struggle' to operationalize a command from God which they know is His will to perform; and we have to do likewise, not least in the preaching of the Gospel, both obeying and prevailing. This makes more sense of Jer. 51:12, which says that "The Lord (of Hosts/ Angels, v. 14) hath *both* devised and done that which He spake" about Babylon.

Lamentations

2:10 See on Job 2:12

The primary fulfilment of Ezekiel too is in the restoration from Babylon. The great emphasis on the Angel-cherubim shows the importance of the Angels in it. The Cherubim of chapter 1 "came out of the north" (v. 4). "The North" in the prophets often refers to "the north country" of Babylon. Is the whole vision primarily describing the Angels coming from Babylon, with the wheels "upon the earth" (v. 15) representing natural Israel under Angelic control? Thus "when the living creatures (Angels) went, the wheels went by them" (v. 19), due to the Angelic inspiration of the Jews and their touching the hearts of men like Cyrus, Ezra and Nehemiah "according to the good hand (Angel) of. . God upon" them; "the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels" (v. 20). Remember that the Angels

are the vehicles of God's Spirit. The visions of the glory progressively removing from the temple show the Angel departing from Jerusalem, and then in chapters 40-48 the glory Angel returns to a re-built Jerusalem. Recall how the Angel in Ex. 33 and 34 is also described as the "glory".

3:5- see on Jer. 23:18,22

The four Angels or groups of Angels that comprised them had wings which "kissed one another" (Ez. 3:13 A. V. mg.) and moved with a soft, smooth sound, despite all four being distinct in some ways. Thus the loving co-operation of the Angels in their work is emphasized. See on Gen. 1:26.

The way Peter was given a vision and asked to eat what he had previously thought unclean has many similarities with Ezekiel going through a similar experience (Ez. 4:10-14 cp. Acts 10:14).

5:17 see on 1 Kings 22:22

Ez. 7:4 eye- see on 2 Kings 17:23

Israel's Angel ministered judgement on Israel- Ezek. 7:14 and 20:17 describe God's eye (the Angel Michael) not sparing or pitying, and in so doing goes back to the language of Is. 63 where we see that the Angel was capable of showing pity, but ceased to because of Israel's sin (v. 9,10).

It is worth considering whether the visions Ezekiel had of the progressive departure of "the glory of the God of Israel" (Ez. 8:4) from the temple to the East of Jerusalem and then further away are describing the literal departure of the Angel from His dwelling place over the ark in the temple. Similarly "the glory" Angel departed (1 Sam. 4:21) when the ark over which He dwelt was taken by the Philistines. See on Ps. 78:60

9:8 - see on Ex. 12:23

There seems to be a strong implication that the Angels were involved with writing the Bible through their inspiration of men. So close is the connection between the word of God and of Angels that "the sound of the (Angel) cherubim. . . was heard . . . as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh" (Ez. 10:5). Zechariah stresses that the prophecies of the restoration were given by an Angel (1:9-14; 4:1,5; 5:5,10; 6:4,5). The true prophet is one who "has stood in the council of the Lord to perceive and hear His word" (Jer. 23:18,22); and yet these are exactly the words used of how the Angels stand in the council of Heaven and hear Yahweh's word (1 Kings 22; Ps. 103:18-22). The Angels are therefore reflective of the situation on earth; as they stood before the Father's throne to hear the word in the council of Heaven, they were representative of the prophet on earth whom they were used to inspire. As the prophets were gathered together before the thrones of the Kings of Israel and Judah, they were reflecting how the Angels in Heaven were assembled before the throne of Yahweh, on whose throne the human kings were ruling (1 Kings 22:10). The lying spirit / Angel which appeared before Yahweh's throne would therefore have been reflected in Micaiah (:15). What we have here is the court of Heaven being reflected in the situation upon earth, seeing that each of the prophets was represented by an Angel in Heaven.

Consider the implications of Ez. 12:25: "I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall be performed. It shall be no more deferred: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I speak the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord" (R.V.). There seems to be the suggestion that God 'speaks' a word / plan / intention; and when He decides to operationalize it, then He

speaks it again- presumably in the court of Heaven.

13:9- see on Ex. 32:32

Angels can give those who are closing their minds to the clear truth of the word the temptation to believe wrong things, in a similar way to which God through the Angels hardened Pharaoh's heart as a result of his own already hardened heart. Ezekiel 14:9 clearly states "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the LORD hath deceived that prophet". Jeremiah says that "O LORD Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived (mg. 'enticed')" (Jer. 20:7); although Jeremiah was not actually deceived in the prophecy he was given, it seems that he sensed there was a possibility that he had been, which is backed up by the Ezekiel reference. In 1 Kings 22:22, the Angels made the false prophets of Ahab to prophesy falsely. This fact is picked up in the New Testament by Paul saying it was possible for an Angel from Heaven to preach a wrong Gospel to them (Gal. 1:8). If it was fundamentally impossible for an Angel to do this, why does Paul say it? See on 2 Thess. 2:2; 1 Tim. 4:1; Is. 19:13,14; Ez. 20; 1 Jn. 4:1.

Ez. 14:21 talks of God sending "My four sore judgements upon Jerusalem, the sword and the famine and the noisome beast, and the pestilence". These are four similar judgements to those ministered by the four living creatures in Rev. 6 and by the four Angel chariots of Zech. 6. There is reason to think that these creatures and chariots represent Angels; so it is worth speculating that whenever a group of four judgements are mentioned, there is a reference to the four cherubim Angels bringing them. Ezek. 6:15,17 mentions the same four judgements as 14:21, and describes them as "the evil arrows" sent by God- His "Angels of evil" (Ps. 78:49)? The context in Ez. 14 is God saying that even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in the land, they would not stop the judgements coming (v. 14,20). This seems to be directly referring to the Angels deciding to bring their judgements on Sodom (which typifies Jerusalem- Is. 1:10) despite a handful of righteous being there (Gen. 18:24). It is even possible that the "noisome beasts" of Ez. 14:15 which were to spoil the land in judgement are the four beasts/ living creatures of Dan. 7 controlling the various nations used to execute these judgements.

Moses is set up as example and representative of his people Israel. Israel is likened in Ez. 16:5 to a child rejected at birth, but miraculously found and cared for, and brought up with every pampered blessing. Just as Moses was. Stephen described the 'putting out' of Moses with the same word used in the LXX for what happened to Israel in Ezekiel 16 (Acts 7:21; Ex. 2:3 LXX).

16:59-62 - see on Zech. 11:10,11



20:6 espied- see on Num. 10:33

20:8-13 - see on Ex. 12:23

20:17- see on Ez. 7:14; 9:1; Ex. 34:9

The idea of two Angels being present with Israel is found in Ez. 20:17,22; God's "eye", which is definitely Angelic language, spared them from being destroyed- by the destroyer Angel. And therefore God "withdrew mine hand", also Angelic language, in order not to destroy them. Note too how it is the Angelic "eye of the Lord" which is paralleled with God's mercy in Ps. 33:18,22.

Ez. 20:38 says that the rebels in the wilderness "shall not enter into the land", with reference to how when Moses called the people "rebels" and beat the rock, he was disallowed entry into the land. Because he called them rebels, i.e. unworthy of entry to the Kingdom, he also was treated as a rebel. If we condemn others, we likewise will be condemned. On another level, he was simply barred for disobedience; and on yet another, his prayer to the effect that he didn't want to be in the land if his people weren't going to be there was being answered; and on yet another and higher level, his offer to be blotted out of the book of inheritance for Israel's sake was also being heard. Thus God works within the same incident in so many ways!

Ez. 20:35 shows how the 'second Exodus' of the Jews from their dispersion at the time of the second coming will also involve the activity of the Angel Michael. "I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face". It must be through the Angel Michael that God pleads with them face to face (cp. Ex. 33:10).

31:15 waters- see on Rev. 16:5.

35:6 prepared- see on Rev. 6:9

Perhaps it is to the physical presence of the Angel in the land (see on Dt. 11:12) that Ezek. 35:10 refers "Thou (the Arabs) hast said, These two nations and these two countries (Israel and Judah) shall be mine, and I will possess it; whereas the LORD (the Angel Michael) was there".

36:26- see on 1 Sam. 10:9

Ezekiel's prophecies of Israel's regathering have their primary fulfilment in the restoration. Ez. 36:36: "The heathen that are left round about you (the other nations that the Babylonians had placed in Israel) shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places" (by the miraculous rebuilding of the temple amidst great opposition).

Ez. 37:9: "Prophesy unto the wind. . . and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; come from the four winds, O breath (wind), and breathe upon these slain, that they may live". Is this the command to Michael, Israel's Angel which comes into action for them in the last days (Dan. 12:1) to start to regather Israel? He is called forth from his exalted place dwelling between the four cherubim Angels. The language is reminiscent of that in Gen. 2:7, where the Angel breathed into man the breath of life, which caused him to stand up upon his feet (cp. Ez. 37:10)- and here the Angel is being asked to do the same, to Israel. Further connections between the "wind" and Israel's Angel are in Jer. 4:11-13.

37:14 alludes directly back to the vision of the Angel-cherubim's spirit being placed in the "wheels" of natural Israel in 1:20,21: "I (the Angel) shall put My spiirt in you, and ye shall live".

There are many similarities between Assyria and the Gog invasion. The two invasions of Gog (or three? Ez. 38:4,8,10; or four if v. 4 implies two invasions: "I will turn thee back. . . and bring thee

forth"-again) find their basis in Assyria coming up several times before the final onslaught on Jerusalem. It seems evident to the present writer that there is only one coming of Christ- not a coming to the saints which is an invisible coming to the rest of the world, followed by a public "coming". This seems to rest on a misapplication of the coming of Christ with the suddenness of a thief on the unworthy saints; it also leads to advocating a kind of invisible 'parousia' almost identical to that believed in by Jehovah's pseudo witnesses.

One cannot miss the emphasis in Ezekiel 38 on the many "horses and horsemen", and the type of armour described ("Bucklers and shields", 38:4) gives the impression of many well armed cavalry men. Notice Ez. 38:15 too: "All of them riding upon horses". Why this emphasis on cavalry? The Angels are described as horse riders in Zechariah and Revelation; the horses in the chariots of Zech. 6 are also Angels (see Chapter 11), and there is the obvious connection with the Angel-cherubim chariot. Further Angelic language is found in 38:20 "My presence"; 39:7 "The Holy One".

Ezekiel 38 and 39 speak of the Gog invasion in very similar language to prophecy concerning Assyria. The following connections are clear:

Gog in Ezekiel	Assyria in Isaiah
38:4	37:29
38:8	24:21,22 (this concerns "the kings of the earth" in the Gog confederacy)
38:9	28:2
38:11	37:24
38:12	10:6
38:19	30:27
38:19,20	29:6; 30:25
38:22	29:6 RV; 30:30
39:10	33:1-3

The fact the Angels lead Assyria/Gog to invade Israel in the last days suggests that the "spirits" of Rev. 16:13-16 which gather the nations (notably the Gog confederacy) to Armageddon have something to do with Angels, perhaps through controlling other factors which act as influencing spirits on the nations.

Ez. 38:7 is the Angels speaking to Gog: "Be thou prepared, and prepared for thyself, thou, and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard (prison) unto them".

Gog was to "be visited" (38:8). This is Angelic language. The parallel passage in Is. 24:21-23 also speaks of the Gog confederacy: "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish (Heb. 'visit') the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered together in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then. . the Lord of Hosts (Angels) shall reign". There are clear parallels with Gog's confederacy being visited by God, after they have been 'imprisoned' by Gog in order to support Gog's invasion. Gog is to be a "guard"- 'a prison' (s. w. Gen. 42:19)- to the other nations (38:7). "The host of the high ones that are on high (Heaven), and the kings of the earth upon the earth" refers to both the Angels and their earthly charges. The Isaiah passage implies a gathering together of the confederacy associated with a first Angelic 'visiting', followed by a "many days" period after which there will be a second Angelic visiting and the final invasion. The phrase "many days" does not necessarily imply a very long period of years- "Jacob. . mourned for his son many days" (Gen. 37:34)- not more than twenty years at the outside. A woman could have "an issue of her blood many days" (Lev. 15:25). "Ye abode in Kadesh many days" (Dt. 1:46). Shimei "dwelt in Jerusalem many days" (1 Kings 2:38). These two Angelic visitings are spoken of in Ez. 38 too: "I (the Angels) will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth". And secondly "After many days thou (Gog) shalt be visited" by the Angels; "things (shall) come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: and thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwallled villages. . "(v. 10,11). This thinking was a result of Angelic visiting of Gog- to achieve their purpose of making both Assyria and Gog invade Israel, the Angels acted and will act directly on the hearts of the leaders of those nations.

There is much evidence that the Kingdom starts initially in Jerusalem and then spreads worldwide slowly. Many of the prophecies concerning it are addressed to "Jerusalem" and "Mount Zion". The stone of Daniel 2 hits the earth and grows from there to cover the earth. It is logical if it hits the earth at Jerusalem, where all the kingdoms of men represented by the metals will be present, gathered together against Jerusalem. It appears that the unworthy having been destroyed, a colony of saints is established around Jerusalem, living in Kingdom conditions. They live in "the land of unwallled villages. . dwelling safely all of them. . . without walls, and having neither bars nor gates" (Ez. 38:11)- Kingdom language. The Angels give Gog the "evil thought" of invading the "land of unwallled villages", apparently after the invasions of the land as a whole. The people living there are "gathered out of the nations"- capable of reference to the saints (Mt. 25:31-34) who have just been gathered from all nations. The great wealth which attracts Gog must be due to the Kingdom conditions there- the Arab invasions of Zech. 14 (which must be before the second coming, seeing that Jerusalem is ransacked) will have devastated the land of its present wealth. The sudden prosperity reported around Jerusalem will no doubt intrigue the world, and prove a fatal attraction. "The desolate places that are now inhabited" (v. 12) probably refers specifically to the temple area/old city of Jerusalem which will have been the scene of much bitter Israeli/Arab fighting. Thus the final onslaught of Gog and his followers occurs, this time with Christ and the redeemed in Jerusalem, thus fulfilling Psalm 2: "The kings of the earth (cp. Is. 24:21) set themselves. . . against the Lord, and against His anointed (Christ). . . yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion". Any who find it hard to imagine Christ and the saints temporarily giving ground to Gog and allowing themselves to be besieged in Jerusalem by him should reflect that an almost identical situation will occur at the end of the Millennium, when another (how different?) Gog and Magog will push the saints back into Jerusalem with Christ, until He breaks out upon them again.

Human armies are often described in Angelic language because there are Angels controlling them. This is also the case here with the Gog invasion, which is fitting seeing that Angels were behind the initial Assyrian invasion which is the prototype of that of Gog. They are described as "a great company, a mighty army" (Ez. 38:15)- reflecting the mighty Heavenly host. "Gomer. . . Togarmah. . . and all his bands" may refer to the Angels of those lands bringing forth their Angel-armies, in the same way as there was an Angelic "prince of Persia" in Dan. 10:13. Yet it is also so that all aspects of true spirituality have their antithesis in the false system of the world. Thus the real Christ is aped by an anti-Christ; and the armies of Heaven are matched by the armies of the earth, who are described in the same outline language. It is also emphasized that the invasion came from "the north". Whilst not in any way questioning the geographical reference here, "the north" is also a reference to Heaven. The word implies a hidden place, and a closely related word is translated "hidden" in Ps. 83:3: "They. . . consulted against Thy hidden ones". Other examples include:

- "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7)- the north seems to refer to the Heavens, a place void of man's presence.
- Lucifer said: "I will ascend into Heaven I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will also sit upon the mount of the Congregation in the sides of the north... above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Is. 14:13,14). This shows the connection between the north and Heaven, both literally and the figurative Heaven of the temple against which Lucifer aspired, and in which the "Most High" (an Angelic title) dwelt.
- "I have raised up one (Jesus) from the north" (Is. 41:25)- a reference to Christ's Heavenly origin?
- "The secret place of the most High" (Ps. 91:1) refers to the tabernacle- which is the "Heavenlies" (we have earlier mentioned the connections between Heaven and the temple/tabernacle).
- The believers coming down from 'Heaven', a place void of man's human presence and where they cannot be harmed by man (1 Thess. 4:14; Rev. 6:9-11;21:2; Matt. 6:20; Heb. 12:23) is perhaps connected to the idea of the believers as the Cherubim in Ez. 1 coming from the figurative north.
- The offerings were slain on the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:11)- because the north represented God's presence?

2:32,33 Brass and iron- See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17 for similarities between the image and Goliath.

John Drake: If you take the time to look at the history of the middle east you will find that the empires that succeeded Greece and the division into the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Empires was not Rome but the Parthians, then the Sassanids and then Islam. It was Islam that overthrew the Eastern Roman Empire in Byzantium. Rome never fulfilled the requirements of Daniel 7:23 and Dan 2:40 in crushing breaking and trampling all the others. Rome was able to conquer less than 1/3 of the Seleucid Empire (have a look at history). The Roman Empire does not qualify as the Empire of Iron in Nebuchadnezzar's dream because it did not successfully conquer and crush Babylon, Persia and

Greece. It left Babylon untouched, could not conquer Persia, and its own culture was subservient to Greek culture and language. Rome did not crush any of the other three empires. On the other hand Islam was “different from all the other kingdoms” Dan 7:23. It has one culture (Islam), a different language (Arabic & Farsi in Iran) and one religion. The other empires had multiple gods, cultures and language, as did Rome.

The divided nature of Islam is very evident in the Sunni and Shia factions of Islam and fits well with the iron legs and the divided nature of the feet. They are one in purpose – the expansion of Islam to rule the world together with the destruction of Israel.

The fourth beast of Daniel is the same beast that John sees in Revelation. It is made up of components of the first three beasts. It like a lion (Babylon), looked like a bear (Medes and Persians) and looked like a leopard (Greece). This surely indicates that the beast must be identified with the same geographical areas as those in Daniel and that was Mesopotamia. Bear in mind also that the vision of Dan 2 was given to Nebuchadnezzar, not Daniel and not Israel. It was about Babylon and kingdoms that would arise in Mesopotamia.

The mountains upon which the harlot of Revelation sits represent seven kings. Five are fallen. One is and one is yet to come. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece fell before the time of John. The one that existed at the time of John was Rome and one was to come. The one that came was Islam and later the Ottoman Empire. Muslims worldwide and particularly Turkey now seek to revive the caliphate and this I believe is the eighth head of the beast represents the 7 previous empires and it will have dominion over the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece as represented by the leopard, bear and the lion.

Daniel 3:28 shows Nebuchadnezzar recognizing that an Angel had been physically sent to Daniel and his friends in the fiery furnace. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

4:13,17- see on Dan. 9:14

Both the Angels and the Lord Jesus are called God’s “Holy One” (Dan. 4:13,17; Acts 2:27). This isn’t to say that Jesus is an Angel; rather are we showing the solidarity between Himself and the Angels. The closeness of the Angels to Jesus is shown by the fact that they literally bore Him up whenever He tripped against a stone. No wonder therefore that He had such temptation to misuse this great protection; His conquering of the temptation to make use of such Angelic interest in Him at His arrest and crucifixion appears an even greater victory once this is appreciated.

A link between Angels and the spirit of prophecy is to be found in the way Nebuchadnezzar perceived that his dream had been given him by the Angelic “holy ones” (Dan. 4:13,17), and therefore he asks the prophet Daniel to interpret it for him because he knew that “the spirit of the holy gods (Angels?) is in thee” (Dan. 4:18). See on 2 Sam. 23:1-3

Nebuchadnezzar was told that the destruction of his power was a “matter by the decree of the watchers [i.e. Angels, the eyes of the Lord], and the demand by the word of the holy ones” (Dan. 4:17). The Chaldee words translated “matter, “decree” and “demand” are all legal terms, implying a legal answer / response, “a judicial decision” as Strong defines “the demand”. Something came before the court of Heaven- presumably the matter in question was Nebuchadnezzar’s pride and his

position on the Jews (Daniel's advice in 4:27 to shew mercy to the poor may be a reference to what the King should've been doing to the Jews- perhaps by enabling their return to their land?). And a 'judicial decision' was made and "a watcher and a Holy One came down from Heaven" to operationalize it (Dan. 4:13). If this is the extent of Angelic attention to the heart of a Gentile king- how much more earnestly are they debating the states of our hearts and our actions, and issuing decrees for action accordingly?

Dan. 4:17 speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation as being "by the demand of the word of the holy ones". Was it that the Angels had noticed this man's awful pride, reported it to God Himself in the court of Heaven, and then been empowered to carry out his demise? The same context reminds us that God does according to *His* will in the army of Heaven (Dan. 4:35). And yet His purpose is to some extent moulded by them. And we are led to ask, how much influence do *we* His beloved children have upon His actual purpose? In the context of Daniel, one observes that a "herald" cried aloud to peoples of all nations and languages, and bid them worship the Babylonian image, on pain of being cast into a fiery furnace (Dan. 3:4 ff.). And yet in Rev. 14:6, an Angel cries to all nations and languages, warning them that if they *do* worship the image, they will be cast into the lake of fire. The Angels had observed Nebuchadnezzar's arrogance and defiance, and many centuries later they will work out their way of parodying it in their future proclamation. The point is, they have the power to work out their way of operation in accordance with their perceptions and understandings; in this we see the "freedom of the spirit" which is now and shall be ever accorded to Yahweh's elohim.

4:23- see on Jer. 23:18,22

Nebuchadnezzar realized after his humbling that one of his reasons for pride had been due to him not realizing the extent to which the "great Babylon which (he) had built" (Dan. 4:30) and the Kingdom he had gained were in fact the total result of the work of the Angels; "He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven (the Angels), and among the inhabitants of the earth" (v. 35).

4:31- see on 2 Pet. 2:10

Angels being "Spirits" it is reasonable to suggest that they have particular control over the spirit/breath of life and character (the spirit can also refer to the mind) which is within each of their charges. The intensity of their interest in us is demonstrated by the fact that they personally, consciously keep us alive every moment- "the God, in whose hand thy breath (spirit) is" (Dan. 5:23) is our Angel. They are the source of Spirit, they are made spirits to sustain men (Ps. 104:3,4); and "the hand of God" is Angelic language. When "the spirit returns to God" (Ecc. 12:7) is this a reference to our Angel physically returning to Heaven, having been with us on earth for much of our lives? Heb. 12:22,23 is a passage that seems to defy convincing exposition: "Ye are come unto. . . an innumerable company of Angels. . . to the spirits of just men made perfect". This would equate the spirits with the Angels who had been their guardians. Two other references in Hebrews to "spirits" are to Angels (Heb. 1:7,14). Other passages which seem to imply some consciousness after death would therefore refer to our guardian-Angel spirit; e. g. the souls under the altar crying to God after their death (Rev. 6:9,10). The implication could well be that we should ourselves endure, because we are now associated with the Angels who were the guardians of faithful men of the past who endured. The thought is obviously intended by the writer to encourage us to hold on, knowing that as the guardian Angels stood by and perfected through trial the lives of the faithful in the past, so they will with us.

7:4,5 Lion and bear- See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

Angels can represent political powers before God. This has interesting implications in Dan. 8:8-12: "four notable ones toward the four winds of Heaven (the number four and "winds" we have seen to both have Angelic connections). And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which. . . waxed great, even to the host of Heaven (the Angels controlling the Jewish people); and it cast down some of the host and of the stars (both "host" and "stars" are Angelic words), and stamped upon them; Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host (the "Most High" Angel, the Angel of Jesus, who was the real prince of the Angel hosts), and by him. . . the place of His sanctuary (i. e. the temple, where the "Most High" Angel dwelt) was cast down. And an host (of Angels controlling the Romans and perhaps the Papacy too) was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the Truth to the ground. "The Truth" here does not necessarily refer to a set of doctrines or people holding them which comprises the true Gospel. This can never be thrown down, and in any case "the Truth" in this sense was not thrown down after the destruction of the temple in AD70. "The truth" being thrown down may parallel the host and stars being cast to the ground in v. 10- in which case "the truth" represents the Jews- or it may hint at the Mosaic Law being "thrown down" by the Angelic destruction of the temple and the Mosaic system. "Thy Law (of Moses) is the Truth" (Ps. 119:142). This all lays the basis for Rev. 12 describing the conflicting groups of Angels in Heaven at the time of the final abolition of the Mosaic system.

Dan. 8:11 speaks of "the prince of the Host" living in the temple, a phrase recalling the Angel captain of the Lord's host in Josh. 5:15. See on Ps. 78:60

The tribulations which come upon God's people are described in Daniel 8:13 as being under the control of "Palmoni" (A. V. mg.), or the 'wonderful numberer' as that can be translated, implying that there is one powerful Angel who co-ordinates the timing of all things, and other Angels ask this Angel for information concerning the time periods worked out for the saints in their charge, as here in Daniel's case. Job seemed to have sensed very keenly the "appointed time" for his trials to end and for his "change" of nature to occur. We have seen that the phrase "appointed time" is the same word as "host" used regarding the Angels. But like Job, because we can't see the Angel physically it's easy to get bitter about the trials brought upon us by them, as Balaam got bitter with the ass until he physically saw the Angel causing the trial (Num. 22:23). See on Job 14:5; Dan. 12:1

Dan. 8:15 records Daniel seeking to understand the meaning of a vision; but two verses earlier, an Angel had asked another Angel for understanding of the same vision. Here surely we have the practical meaning, in Angelic terms, of God knowing our prayers and arranging the answers before we even ask them. Perhaps it was Daniel's guardian Angel who asked a more senior Angel for the interpretation of the vision, knowing Daniel was going to be asking for it. Yet it was the second Angel who actually gave the answer to Daniel (Dan. 8:14). Verse 16 describes the one Angel standing at the Ulai river calling out: "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision". Yet at this time, Daniel himself was in vision at the Ulai river (:2). His guardian Angel was there, right in front of him. And He had foreknown Daniel's feelings and arranged for another Angel to respond to them...and so the second Angel (Gabriel) also comes near where Daniel was standing (:17). His guardian Angel had literally called Gabriel to come over to Daniel... And all this is going on for you and me *hourly* in the court of Heaven! There's another example of this in Dan. 12. There are two Angels with Daniel by the river (:2). One of them asks the other: "How long shall it be to the end...?" (:6; cp. 8:13). Yet this

was exactly the spirit of Daniel! And then the other Angel gives *Daniel* the answer. His guardian Angel knew his unexpressed questions and desires, and passed them on to another Angel to answer. See on Zech. 1:12

If our Angel has not the strength or authority to give us a blessing which He sees we need, He can ask another Angel to bring this about- thus Daniel's guardian Angel had to ask Gabriel to help Daniel understand the vision which He knew Daniel so desperately wanted to have interpreted (Dan. 8:16). It may be that this request by the guardian Angel was not for the best for Daniel, because it seems to have been denied by God- v. 27 says that at the end of the interpretation or "understanding" being given by Gabriel, "I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding" (v. 27 N.I.V.). In that case, it would seem that when Gabriel said "Understand, O son of man. . ." (v. 17), Gabriel Himself either did not appreciate that giving Daniel the understanding would not help him, or He obeyed the request from the guardian Angel unquestioningly. Or alternatively, was Gabriel saying in v. 17 that Daniel was to understand that the vision would not be fully understood till the last days, as in Dan. 12:4? This would mean that it is in the hands of the Angels as to at what time, both individually and as the body of God's people generally, we gain spiritual understanding of certain parts of the word, in the same way as the Angels debated "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? . . ". This may be very relevant to the various interpretations of Revelation held by God's true people down through the years, each interpretation giving great encouragement to a certain group of saints, despite their details varying considerably. This process would then be seen to be under the direct control of the Angels.

8:18- see on 9:21

8:24- see on Rev. 21:12

It seems not unreasonable to suggest that the Angels, who were used to inspire men with the word of God in the first place and who now watch over it's fulfillment in the world today, will especially look on us to see if that word is going to achieve it's main purpose of making us spiritual people, and that conversely they punish us if we disobey that word. Thus Daniel, who was relatively attune to the Angelic ways of working, said (Dan. 9:14) "Therefore hath the LORD (the Angel?) watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us. . for we obeyed not His voice", alluding back to God's command concerning the Angel which was to look after Israel "If thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak. . ." (Ex. 23:22). Dan. 4:13,17 describe the Angels as watchers -i. e. watching over the execution of the word, and in order to fulfil it they (the watcher Angels) drove Nebuchadnezzar from men (v. 25) and they "commanded to leave the stumps of the tree" (v. 26). See on Jer. 1:11,12

Gabriel being caused to "fly with weariness" (Dan. 9:21 AVmg.) is an example of the Bible's 'language of limitation' which may refer to the Angels rather than God personally.

Dan. 9:21 "I am now come forth to give thee (Daniel) skill and understanding" said Gabriel, implying He had been sent forth from Heaven to earth by God to explain the vision to Daniel. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

One of the ways the Angels spiritually strengthen us is by revealing the understanding of God's word to us, as they initially inspired it. Thus "Gabriel. . . being caused to fly swiftly. . . informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding" in the word of God He had previously revealed to him (Dan. 9:21,22). The Angel flying swiftly should be compared with the passages which talk about running swiftly in order to understand and obey God's word (Hab. 2:2; Amos 8:11,12; Ps. 147:15; Dan. 12:4; 2 Thess. 3:1). Dan. 8:18 also describes how the Angel gave Daniel spiritual revelation.

9:23- see on 10:12

10:1 According to Ezra 3:12, some old men returned. Why not Daniel? Admittedly he was very old at this time. Is this one of the few indications of spiritual weakness in Daniel? Others would be in Dan. 3, where the obvious question is 'Where was Daniel'? Another would be the consideration from 10:4 cp. Ex. 12:18 that Daniel didn't keep Passover- he kept the eating of unleavened bread but if he didn't eat any meat, he didn't eat the Passover lamb. Was his faith in God's deliverance of His people fading? Or was he spiritually so on another plane that it was OK for him not to keep the Passover, even though the person who didn't keep it was to be cut off from amongst God's people? The third year of Cyrus- 72 years after the captivity. Daniel therefore was wondering why no successful restoration- he'd been over 70 years in Babylon. He may also have been distressed that the majority of Jews in Babylon had chosen not to return to Judah; and he would've heard that those who had returned had faced huge opposition, indeed the rebuilding of the temple was halted until the second year of Darius (Ezra 4:24).

The fact the Angels are limited in wisdom and power explains the delay in answer to some of our prayers. Daniel 10 is a clear example of this. Daniel 10:2 records that Daniel prayed for three weeks, presumably for understanding of the vision. In v. 12 Daniel is told by the Angel that "from the first day... thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words". So because of his prayer ("words"- perhaps put like that to emphasize the power of the 'mere' words uttered in prayer), an Angel was sent from God to give him the understanding he had asked for. His very first prayer for this was answered- but the actual answer came three weeks later. The reason for this was that the Angel had been withstood by the prince of Persia for 21 days (v. 13). Three weeks is 21 days. So Daniel's first prayer was answered, but it took the Angel three weeks to work out the answer in practice; but during this time Daniel kept on praying, although at the time it must have seemed to him that no answer was forthcoming. So let us be prepared to persevere in prayer, as those saints in Rev. 8 did and were rewarded by the incense finally being offered by the Angel to Christ, and then to God. It may just be possible that there is a mighty Angel of answered prayer (Gabriel?), in the same way as there is a 'wonderful numberer' co-ordinating the timing of God's purpose, and an Angel specifically representing Jesus and Israel (do these four make up the four forms of Angel manifestation in the cherubim and four living creatures?). This Angel would co-ordinate the presentation and answering of prayers. The Angel then describes how he confirmed and strengthened Darius (11:1) to the same end to enable the prayer to be answered- as if when our Angel sees someone set in a course of action which will lead to the answer of our prayer, they are confirmed and strengthened in it. The same idea is found in Dan. 9:23; a command being given from God to answer a prayer as soon as it's

prayed, but there being a delay to the answer due to the Angels effecting the answer. "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment (from God to answer your prayer) came forth, and I (the Angel) am come to show thee". The wonder of all this needs some reflection. Our words, the thoughts within human braincells, call forth the Angels from the court of Heaven. "When we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice, and sent an angel [from the myriads standing on the right and left hands of His throne] and brought us forth out of Egypt" (Num. 20:16). Yet the voice that Angel responded to was the voice not so much of specific prayers but of the situation of the people. And the same is with us... See on Zech. 3:1; Zech. 6:8; Hag. 1:2

10:5- see on Rev. 1:13

10:8 Retained no power- as in 11:6. Often in Daniel we read of "power" coming from God and being given to and taken from men. Daniel learnt in his own personal experience what this felt like, to enable him to better understand the prophecies he was giving. His mortality and weakness, and ours, is the whole world's mortality and weakness. The Hebrew word for "power" is that used in 1:4- Daniel had ability [power] to stand before the earthly King; now he is unable to stand and has no power, before the Heavenly King. All his human strength was being shown to be nothing. Not by [human] power but by God's Spirit would the restoration be achieved (Zech. 4:6).

Daniel 10:9-11 describes in parabolic form the judgement, with Daniel representing the saints, rising from the grave (as he rose from "deep sleep" on the ground) in great fear and sense of unworthiness, but being comforted by the Angel with news of how pleasing we have been to them ("O Daniel, a man greatly beloved"). This again indicates that the Angels will have a large part to play in the judgement.

10:11 NOW sent- i.e. after the 3 weeks delay

10:11 understand- but ch. 12 he didn't understand all details. No need to understand all details to "understand" .

10:12 Daniel's prayer for Israel's restoration was above all a desire to "understand".

10:13 In the record, Cyrus seems willing to restore Israel- but he resisted 3 weeks. Things aren't what they seem- people may appear to act or believe one way, when they've greatly resisted it. 10:20 Angel fought with him; he remained fighting with the rulers of Persia- hence 11:1. This means that Cyrus didn't simply wake up one morning and decree that the Jews could return to their land; he resisted it, and the Angel had an ongoing battle with him over it. Those who appear 'on our side' in life may have actually battled against Angels *not* to be like that to us.

10:13 withstood ['to stand before / in front of']- the same two Hebrew words here translated "withstood" recur in 10:16, where Daniel 'stood before' the Angel. As Daniel stood before the Angel, so the Prince of Persia had also stood before the Angel. It could be understood that Daniel likewise withstood the Angel [see 10:1 note re. Daniel's possible weakness]. But more likely are we to perceive that the Angel had both Daniel and the Prince of Persia standing before Him- and had had this situation for the past three weeks in which Daniel had been in prayer. Our prayers are therefore

a coming before God in a judgment scenario; we stand before Him, as our adversaries do; and He will hear us.

10:13 help- a common word in the restoration prophecies, promising God's "help" for Judah's restoration (Is. 41:10,13,14; Is. 44:2; Is. 49:8). Those promises of "help" were fulfilled in the Angels being sent to help.

10:13 Both Angels and human rulers are called "princes"- to show each human ruler has an Angel representing them. Dt. 32:8 LXX suggests each nation has a representative Angel

10:13 Michael one of the chief- implies a hierarchy amongst Angels; Jude 9 Michael the Archangel

10:13 remained- implies the physical presence of the Angels is significant. We are invited to see them as leaving the court of Heaven in response to our prayers and needs (as in 1 Kings 22:19-22), and moving around the earth to operationalize God's answers to our prayers- as 10:20; 9:21,22; Gen. 18:10. One word of prayer can result in Angels being sent all that 'distance' from Heaven to earth to assist us, as in Num. 20:16 "when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt".

When Michael came to help the other Angel overcome the prince of Persia, that Angel "was not needed there with the kings of Persia" (Dan. 10:13 RVmg.). It seems that once the job was done, the Angel wasn't physically required there any more. It seems that great stress is placed in Scripture on the Angels physically moving through space, both on the earth and between Heaven and earth, in order to fulfil their tasks, rather than being static in Heaven or earth and bringing things about by just willing them to happen. See on Gen. 18:10

The Angel Gabriel explained to Daniel in 10:20 that he had to battle with both the rulers of Persia *and Greece* in order to bring about the fulfilment of Daniel's prayer and Jeremiah's prophecy- in the command for the Jews to return to Judah. By appreciating the local politics which the Angel brought about between Persia and Greece, we can better understand why Gabriel had to manipulate *Greece* in order for the *Persians* to allow the Jews to return, and even to encourage them to do so: "From the point of view of the Persian king a strong pro-Persian Judea was a major threat to the Greek coastal lifeline, and as long as the Greeks dominated the coast and Egypt he supported a strong Judean province headed by a Judean-Persian official and peopled by a pro-Persian population, most of whose families were hostages in Babylon and Persia" Othniel Margalith.

The references to the Angel princes of Greece, Persia and Israel in Dan. 10:20,21 could suggest that each nation or people has an Angel representative in Heaven. Indeed Dt. 32:8 appears to say so: "[God] laid down the boundaries of every people according to the number of the sons of God", i.e. the Angels. It could even be possible that the strange reference in Eph. 6:12 to wicked spiritual beings in the Heavens refers to the Angelic representatives of the evil nations and powers here on earth. Those righteous Angels represent those powers in the court of Heaven- without themselves personally being the least bit wicked or sinful.

The word 'strengthened' occurs several times in Dan. 10. An Angel 'strengthens' Daniel, and then comments that "Michael your prince", another Angel, had also helped him- he had "strengthened himself with me" (Dan. 10:21 RVmg.). But then the Angel comments that "As for me...I stood up to confirm and strengthen him", i.e. Michael (Dan. 11:1 RV). The Angel who strengthened Daniel was helped by another Angel, Michael, strengthening him; and then that Angel strengthened Michael. This is possibly a window into the nature of our existence and relationship with each other in the future age!

The great Angel Michael is described as "your (Daniel's) prince"- i. e. his personal guardian Angel (Dan. 10:21)?

It may be that the Bible or the "whole counsel of God" existed in written form in Heaven before it was revealed to men. The fact that there is a literal book of life with writing in it indicates that the Angels do use their capacity to read; and will we too in some form in the Kingdom? Daniel 10:21 is the key passage on this: "I (the Angel) will shew thee that which is noted in the Scripture of Truth: and there is none that holdeth with Me in these things but Michael your prince". In passing, does this imply that the only other Angel apart from Gabriel who had successfully "earnestly desired to look into" these things and understood was Michael, the Angel for Israel? This passage would seem to necessitate some written record in Heaven capable of interpretation by the Angels, the meaning of which was being given to Daniel- hence our great privilege, along with him, in being granted at least a partial understanding of these things. Gabriel goes on to say "now will I shew you the truth" (11:2). "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17); does this again indicate that the actual Bible was in written form in Heaven before revelation to men? So the Angels hear God's word in Heaven, and sometimes inspire men to write some of these words down. In Rev. 1:1 it says that the Revelation came from Jesus originally (and from God before that), but was sent to us and signified by the Angel. Does it follow that the Angel was responsible for working out the symbology, the signifying (putting into sign language) of the book, under the infallible guidance of God and Jesus? If so, we can better understand how the Angels eagerly watch over our attempts to understand the word, and are in a position, as Gabriel with Daniel, to step in and assist us in our understanding of it- not least through the trials of life which they bring opening our eyes to it (cp. Job 36:15). However, we know that not all the Angels have this ability, but rather earnestly look into the things contained in the word; or alternatively, they are used by God to work out the symbology which they themselves do not fully understand.

10:21 cp 11:1 "As also I"- as if as Michael strengthened this Angel, so this Angel had strengthened Michael in the struggle with Darius

10:21 your prince- cp. 10:20 the prince of Greece. We have a personal Angel just as much as entire Gentile nations do.

11:1- see on 10:12

11:2- see on 10:21

Both the prototype in Hezekiah's time and the descriptions in Dan. 11:40 and Ez. 38 require there to be a personal leader of the northern invasion. Rabshakeh and latter day Sennacherib equate with Daniel's "King (not 'power') of the north", and Ezekiel 38's specific reference to a "rosh" [might one,

chief prince] and use of the personal pronoun "thee": "turn thee back. . . thy jaws. . . thine army. . . be thou prepared. . . thy company" etc. All this emphasis needs some explanation. If the prototype of latter day Sennacherib Rabshakeh is to be closely followed, this individual need not be a nation, but a young, headstrong, powerful army commander that mirrors Rabshakeh. To make the clues more exciting, remember that Rabshakeh was probably an apostate Jew (note his references to the covenant name, and evident knowledge of conditions inside Jerusalem). "The man of sin" that is to sit in the temple of God in the last days would seem to have reference back to the "abomination that maketh desolate" and to the planting of the king of the north's tabernacles "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain"- i. e. in the temple area of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:45). This "man of sin" points to an individual.

11:45 "Between the seas"- Relevant to David's victory over Goliath. See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

It would appear from Michael being described as "the prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel's) people" (Dan. 12:1) and because 'Michael' elsewhere in Daniel refers to an Angel, that Michael is the Angel especially responsible for Israel, and therefore one of the most powerful Angels- "Michael one of the chief princes" (Dan. 8:13), "the great prince" (Dan. 12:1). The LXX renders Dan. 12:1 as "the great Angel" (AV "great prince").

The closeness of association between the Angel Michael and His people Israel is shown by the fact that when He 'stands up' in the last days many of the people of Israel ("thy-Daniel's-people") also 'stand up' in resurrection (Dan. 12:1-3).

God sees that our behaviour can be read on more than one level; the same action has elements of righteousness and sin within it. Thus Jehu's massacre at Jezreel was commanded by God, and Jehu was praised for his obedience in doing it (2 Kings 10:30,31), but he was also condemned for it (Hos. 1:4). Yet we simply cannot make such analysis, although we must recognize that this is in fact how God analyzes. And for this reason alone, we are quite unable to anticipate the outcome of the judgment with regard to other believers.

6:7 Cain is used by Jesus as a prototype of the apostate Jewish system- he was the first murderer and the first human liar, and thus symbolized the Jewish devil in Christ's time (Jn.8:44). Adam being a sinner is also a type of the Jews, inadequately covered by the fig leaves which represented the Jewish way of covering sin. Their glossy appearance which soon faded well represented the inadequacy of this method. Hos. 6:7 confirms the equation of Adam with Israel: " They (Israel) like Adam have transgressed the covenant" (AVmg.).

9:13- see on Job 27:14

Jacob's dishonesty was proverbial- Hos. 11:12; 12:2-6 charge Israel with continuing the family characteristic of Jacob by being deceitful and untruthful. Abraham and Jacob especially were characterized by great dishonesty.

" In his manhood he had power with God" (Hos. 12:2 RVmg.) suggests that Jacob reached spiritual maturity that night. To be that familiar with God that we can reason with Him, struggle with Him in prayer, seek to change His will over an illness or situation... this is spiritual maturity. This whole characteristic of striving with God was memorialized in his new name: Israel, implying 'striver and prevailer with God and men'. And this must be the characteristic of Israel after the Spirit too. There is a confusion in the Hebrew between 'striver' and 'prince' - for the struggle comes before the crown. Our relationship with Him, our attaining of salvation, is a struggle, a wrestling, a desperate, desperate clinging on, a pleading with tears. Yet this is almost the opposite of the spirit of our community; a comfortable drifting through life, attending the same round of meetings, largely hearing pleasant platitudes, no tears, no little real self-sacrifice, little realistic self-denial, little self-examination and daily struggle to be the more spiritual in the 'small' things of life, hiding behind the institutionalization of spirituality which our history has inevitably resulted in, staying up late, rising up early, labouring with God to build the House, foregoing the petty luxuries and niceties, give give giving... Yet Jacob that night really is a type of us all

The idea that God's purpose is signed and sealed unchangeably and the Angels are just putting it into practice militates against our faith in prayer. Jacob "had power over the Angel, and prevailed" (Hos. 12:4)- not physically, because the Angel eventually had power over him that way; but spiritually, through his wrestling in prayer, he succeeded. "He wept, and made supplication unto Him. . . even the Lord God of Hosts (Angels)". Because the Angels do change their mind and God's purpose is in many ways open-ended, we should be greatly encouraged in our prayers, knowing that we convince our Angel first, then Christ, and finally trust in God's love to answer what Christ presents to Him. Or has God delegated certain power for the answering of prayer to Angels, leaving it up to them to decide how to answer prayer? No wonder Jacob strove with that Angel so zealously! The idea that we have power over the Angels by our prayers is continued when we consider that Jacob and Jesus saw Angels ascending and descending in that order- as if to imply that the Angels are sent on their missions by us?

'Israel' is the most common title God uses for His people; and it means 'one who struggles with God and prevails'. This, therefore, will be the characteristic of all His people. Note the humility of God, the Almighty, in desiring to articulate our relationship with Him in terms of us struggling with Him and winning. Hos. 12:4 seems to emphasize this, by saying that Jacob in his prayer and pleading had power *over* the Angel. His strength was in his humility; by his strength he had power over God, but it was by his weeping and pleading that he did (Hos. 12:4). This, then, was the true strength 'over' God.

Jacob had made " supplication" to God (Hos. 12:4) as he wrestled the Angel; and at that very same time, God dealt " graciously" (the same word translated " supplication") with Jacob (Gen. 33:11). At that time, God " recompensed" to Jacob according to his sins, and Jacob responded by " turning" (same word translated " recompensed") to his God (Hos. 12:2,8). It's too bad our translations disguise these things. By the end of his life, this spirit of mutuality between him and God had become perfected. And so with us; we too can live our lives thinking that if we do this, that and the other, God will do this and that for us. The idea of a two-way relationship with Him, of His Spirit, with all that implies, dwelling in us, until our will is His will; all this takes time to develop.

The names “Jacob” and “Israel” are often used together (e.g. Hos. 12:12) to show how God saw the Jacob as Israel, without forgetting he was still Jacob.

Speaking in the context of Israel's punishment for idolatry (remember, in God's eyes Israel = Jacob), we are told, apparently out of context, that Jacob served for a wife (singular), and for a wife he kept sheep (Hos. 12:12). Yet this is in the context of v.2, which says that God would punish Israel for their idolatry, according to their ways. And the terrible 14 years of keeping the sheep which their forefather Jacob went through was a type of their punishment for idolatry. As Jacob *served* for Rachel, so Israel served idols and would have to *serve* those idolatrous nations as an appropriate punishment. Keeping sheep in Gentile lands is the basis of the prodigal parable; the young man who left home, tricked his father, sidled past his hostile elder brother with what he was sure was his inheritance by rights, squandered it, kept sheep, and came back a new man. Clearly the Lord had his mind on Jacob, although that parable is full of reference to prophetic descriptions of the nation of Israel, too. Hos. 12:4-6,12,13 seem to say that Jacob's humiliation at the hands of Laban is a type of the future suffering of Jacob, before their final homecoming.

“By a prophet (Moses) the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet (Joshua) was he preserved [s.w. “keep”]” (Hos. 12:13). Joshua and Moses were working and walking in harmony with an Angel in their work. For an Angel ‘brought Israel out of Egypt’, and it was an Angel who ‘kept’ Israel (Ex. 23:20). This shows how prophets and Angels were in tandem with each other. In the work of bringing out and ‘keeping’ a people for God’s Name, we too can have this sense of working in tandem with a guardian Angel every step of the way.

It should be noted that Moses as a type of Christ was not the High Priest. He mediated for Israel on a voluntary basis; not because he was under any duty to offer up their prayers. Indeed, they didn't make any prayers for him to offer up. He pleaded with God for them on his own initiative, rather than being asked by them to do so. And this is the basis of Christ's mediation for us; he pleads for us even when we know not what to pray for, even when we don't realize the need to beseech the Father. Moses' mediation, not so much Aaron's offerings, are the prototype which the New Testament uses to explain the Lord's present work. In the Apocryphal Assumption of Moses (1:14), Moses is made to say of God: " He designed and devised me and he prepared me before the foundation of the world, that I should be the mediator" . These words are alluded to in a number of NT passages. Clearly we are intended to see Moses' mediation as typical of the Lord's. His freewill mediation was the basis of Israel's salvation: " By a prophet (Moses: Dt. 18:18), the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hos. 12:13). This last clause may be a hint that Moses prayed for the gift of life-preserving manna, and thus sustained Israel, all unbeknown to them. Likewise the intensity of his prayers and the supremacy of his willingness to sacrifice himself for them was tragically unknown to them at the time. It's almost sad that these things have to be typical of the Lord's preservation and redemption of us his thick-skinned and unknowing people.

"I will ransom (Israel) from the hand of the grave (the Angel-hand of death). . . repentance shall be hid from Mine eyes" (Angels)- Hos. 13:14. This could imply that in some matters God allows His Angels the freedom to change their / His will; but in others, above all in His ultimate intention to save Israel, His will cannot be changed. Perhaps this explains the contrast with "I have purposed it, and will not repent" (Jer. 4:28).

"Who knoweth if He will return and repent. . . turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil" (Joel 2:14,13). These are the attributes of 'the Lord' that passed before Moses in Ex. 34:5,6, thus also indicating that this was an Angel. Jonah 4:2 makes the same connection.

2:25 see on 1 Kings 22:22

As Israel's enemies make themselves strong, so the weak shall become "strong"- *gibbor* (Joel 3:10). I take this as a reference to the repentant and feeble remnant of Israel becoming strong, rather than [as it is often read] weak Gentile nations becoming strong in the last days. Thus there will be a standoff between the 'mighty men' of the Gentiles (Joel 3:9) and the 'mighty ones' of God, the Angelic hosts working through the feeble remnant on earth whom they will make into 'mighty ones'. Hence the many references in the prophets to the 'mighty men', the *gibborim* of the Gentiles, being slain in the last day. It will be the final showdown, screened world-wide, between the hosts of God and those of men- although we live it all out, we see it all, in our daily experience now.

"Thither cause Thy mighty ones (cp. 'Elohim') to come down" (Joel 3:11) speaks of God manifestation through Angels to destroy the latter day invader, the latter-day Sennacherib.

God condemned Edom / Esau because "his anger did tear perpetually" (Am. 1:11)- as if He was willing to understand the gut reaction of anger [in Esau / Edom's case, over Jacob's deception]; but He does expect us to work through the stages of it, not to be caught up on the 'anger' stage of our reactions to loss and grief. This perhaps explains God's ready overlooking of Job's fist shaking against God.

Amos 2 speaks as if the Angel raised up the prophets (cp. the Angel's words in Zech. 1:1-8): "I destroyed the Amorite before them (the work of the Angel-hornet). . . I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness (all the work of the Angel). . . I raised up your sons for prophets" (v. 9-11)- another example of Angelic involvement in a man's calling and spirituality. See on 2 Sam. 23:1-3

The Spirit's condemnation of Israel in Am. 2:14,15 is loaded with allusions to the fate of Saul and Jonathan on Gilboa, as recorded in David's lament over Jonathan and Saul: " The flight (cp. Saul and sons fleeing before the Philistines) shall perish from the *swift* (= Saul and Jonathan " swifter than eagles"), and the *strong* shall not strengthen his force (= " stronger than lions"), neither shall the *mighty* (" How are the mighty fallen") deliver himself: neither shall he stand that handleth the *bow* (= " the bow of Jonathan...")" .

7:1 It could be argued that the timing of the judgment reflects God's grace- the first harvest had already happened, the King taking the best of the hay [note how Uzziah, the King in Amos' time, 1:1,

"loved husbandry", 2 Chron. 26:10]. The grasshoppers [Heb. locusts] were prepared to destroy the secondary harvest which was not so crucial to survival. It could be that the locusts ate the grass but hadn't moved on to the crops. God's grace is seen in the midst of His judgments; He could have judged Israel far more severely, by destroying the primary harvest. The creation of a locust plague by God naturally alludes to the plague of locusts upon *Egypt* - which was ended by Moses' mediation for Egypt just as Amos now interceded for Israel. This is one of many examples of where God's apostate people are treated as and spoken of in the language of Egypt / the world; the ultimate punishment for the rejected will be to be sent back into the world, the Egypt which they had preferred in their day of opportunity, and share their destiny. Hence Paul writes of being "condemned with the world". See on 7:4.

Note that God consciously "forms" locusts... He sends His rain on the earth, there's a consciousness about every movement in the natural creation, a conscious expenditure of His energy and Spirit.

Note the LXX of Amos 7:1: "Behold, a swarm of locusts coming from the east; and, behold, one caterpillar, king Gog". Yet Amos intercedes: "Repent, O Lord, for this. And this shall not be, saith the Lord". This would suggest that the Gog invasion was conditional and was forestalled by the intercession of Amos; thus not only Ezekiel 40-48 would be conditional prophecy, but Ezekiel 38 and 39 also.

7:2 The only other time we read of Jacob being "small" is when the same Hebrew word is used about Jacob being the "younger" son (Gen. 27:15,42). God delights to work through the weak, the younger sons, the spiritually weak, the sinners... and Amos appeals to God's grace, to continue working through the weak Israel. For how else shall Jacob "arise" - and the same Hebrew words are used of the historical Jacob 'arising' and being saved by God's grace from a just destruction for his sins (Gen. 31:17; 35:1). We can use these ideas to comfort those who feel they have fallen so far into sin that God has stopped working with them. His style is quite the opposite- to use such desperate situations to bring men and women to be His truest servants.

God is open to changing His stated plan due to the mediation of others. It would even appear that Amos believed God could forgive the sins of others because of *his* prayers rather than their repentance. For Amos doesn't merely ask God not to execute His judgments, but to actually forgive Israel. There's an obvious similarity with the intercession of Moses; the only other person to pray "Forgive, I beseech You" is Moses- the same Hebrew words are found on his lips twice (Ex. 34:9; Num. 14:19). Moses' amazing example had been meditated upon by Amos as he did his agricultural work- and he rose up to the same level. He prayed the same prayer. We too should be motivated in our prayer lives by Biblical examples, even using the same words. So many Biblical prayers use the words of previous Scripture. God leads us to see the similarities between our situations and those of Biblical figures- e.g. by giving Amos a vision of judgment upon Israel in terms of a locust plague, which was intended to lead Amos to see Israel as Egypt and himself as Moses in making intercession to end the plague. Amos gets into the spirit of Moses by asking God to "cease" (7:5), using the same word used to describe how the plagues "ceased" as a result of Moses' intercession (Ex. 9:29,33,34).

The relatively small amount of human repentance needed to make the Angel repent is shown in Amos 7. Amos sees visions of the impending judgements on Israel. After each he prays "O Lord God,

forgive, I beseech Thee: who shall stand for Jacob? ('If you, his Angel-God, don't?') for he is small" (Am. 7:2). The answer comes : "The Lord repented for this. It shall not be, saith the Lord". He repented for the sake of one intense prayer! Notice too Amos asking "Who shall stand for Jacob?". Michael the Angel stands for Israel in the court of Heaven (as the Angel 'God of Jacob'; Dan. 12:1), and thus it appears Amos is pointing out that if Israel is condemned and punished they will have no Angel with them- and so the Angel / God changes His mind.

7:3 There really were intended Divine judgments upon Israel at this time which didn't happen thanks to a subsistence farmer praying to God to change His mind... Note the huge implications of the two words "for this". For those few words of Amos, Almighty God changed His mind. What's amazing is that Amos had opened his prophecy by relaying the statement that God would *not* repent of His judgment of Israel (Am. 2:6).

7:4 Called- to the Angels in the court of Heaven? "Contend" suggests a reference to Elijah calling God to contend by fire against an apostate Israel.

Israel are likened to the sea, being burnt up by the heat of God's wrath. But the sea is usually a symbol of the Gentile world- as in the notes on 7:1, apostate Israel are being likened to the Gentiles. God at that time would've burnt up all Israel- had not Amos interceded. This is exactly what happened with Moses. The idea of "part" of God's land and people being burnt up by judgment is common in Revelation- the implication of the allusions back here to Amos could be that *all* God's land / people aren't destroyed in the last days because of intercession by third parties- ourselves?

7:8 Pass by them- GNB "I will not change my mind again about punishing them". God is aware that He has changed His mind... elsewhere He warns that *this* time, His threatened punishment of Israel will not be as another echo in the mountains (Ez. 7:7). But... He *still* doesn't destroy them fully. Hos. 11:8 describes His unbearable tension: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together" (Hos. 11:8). This is the God whose word is ultimately firm still being open to changing it- such is the extent of His love for Israel; and us.

7:9 We never read of Isaac having any idolatrous "high places", but all the patriarchs were amazingly weak at times and so it doesn't surprise us. The point is, the secret sins of God's people, e.g. those of Isaac which by grace aren't recorded in the Biblical record, will be revealed in the time of judgment. Hence the reference in 7:16 to "the house of Isaac".

7:14 Amos stresses that speaking forth God's word wasn't at all what he wished to do or was cut out for. Likewise Paul says that because preaching God's word was against his natural inclination, therefore a calling to preach the Gospel had indeed been given to him (1 Cor. 9:17). Paul was sent to the Gentiles and not the Jews as he might naturally have preferred; the disciples were unlearned and ignorant men called to preach to the Jewish intelligentsia; women weren't accepted as legal witnesses and yet the Lord asks women to be the first witnesses of His resurrection; always in the preaching of His word does God use those who humanly aren't qualified to do so. He doesn't use slick presentation, but rather human weakness in order to convert others. Amos doubtless alludes to himself in Am. 3:8 where he says that a prophet cannot but speak out God's word- and this is alluded

to by the apostles when they say they cannot but speak out what they have seen and heard of Christ.

Amos doesn't actually answer the serious false allegation against him personally, but gets on with speaking forth God's word.

7:17 Imagine the nervous tone of voice in which Amos likely said those words.

Individual animals may be commanded by the Angels to bring about His purpose- Amos 9 is an example of this . "Though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence (this is the language of Angelic limitation- all things are known to God without His searching for them): and though they be hid from My sight (i. e. God's Angel-eyes) in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent and it shall bite them" (v. 3)- in the same way as the Angel commanded Balaam's donkey. The Angelic context is set by the following:

v. 1 "The Lord standing upon the altar"- cp. the Angel of Lk. 1:11 and other Angels appearing by altars

v. 5 "God of Hosts" (Angels)

v. 8 "the eyes (Angels) of the Lord".

9:6 See on Mt. 6:26

Obadiah

The fact Esau mocked Jacob as he skulked off to Padan Aram is picked up in Obadiah 12 as a ground for Esau's condemnation; and yet, humanly, Jacob was at that time by far the bigger and more responsible sinner. A bit of mocking from Esau was, from a human standpoint, a mild response.

God created a great wind with which He brought Jonah and his fellows to their knees in Jonah 1:4. God later creates another great wind with which to teach Jonah something else (Jonah 4:8). Jonah ought to have perceived the same hand of the same God at work with him. Jonah's life "ebbed away" inside the fish (Jonah 2:8)- and a very similar word is used about his experience as he sat under the gourd (Jonah 4:8). In the fish, Jonah prayed that God would save his life, and was heard. But when he was made to feel the same again, he instead prayed God to take away his life. Perhaps this shows that even when we respond well to circumstances, those same circumstances may repeat in order to test us as to whether we will continue to make that right response.

2:8- see on 1:4

4:2 see on Joel 2:14

4:8- see on 1:4

There are a whole set of allusions to Saul and Jonathan's death in Micah 1 and 2, where they are connected with a spiritually collapsed Israel:

Micah 1 and 2

High places (1:3)

" A wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls" (1:8) for apostate Israel

" They covet fields, and take them away...they oppress a man" (2:2)

" Lament with a lamentation of lamentations" for the pathos of it all (2:4 AVmg.)

" Thy shame naked" (1:11)

" It is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem" (1:9)

" Declare ye it not at Gath" (1:10) - regarding Israel's judgment for sin

"The glory of Israel hides in the cave of Adullam" (1:15 NEB)

" She is grievously sick of her wounds" (1:9 AVmg.)

Saul and Jonathan

Slain at the site of *their* high places (2 Sam.1:19,25). These high places are consistently associated with idolatry and at best semi-spirituality.

David's lament over Jonathan and Saul

Saul was guilty of this.

David's lament over Jonathan and Saul

Stripped naked by the Philistines, with Saul's body paraded naked on the wall of Bethshan.

The Philistines took the Israelite cities at this time (31:7), presumably including Jerusalem, which David had to recapture.

This is a direct quote from 2 Sam.1:20.

Saul

How Saul and Jonathan died (31:1,2 AVmg.).

The point of all these allusions to David's lament over Jonathan and Saul is to show that at best Jonathan died the death of a sinner, as does the church whom he typified. Yet it is also possible that there is here the possible hint that Jonathan's personal spirituality was not what

it might have been at this time. There is another reason for these allusions. The Spirit could have described the depth of David's grief using adjectives alone. But instead it chooses to also make the point by way of allusion. The grief of Micah for Israel was that of David for Jonathan: "I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls" (Mic.1:8). The extent of David's grief is another indication of his love for Jonathan; and this is a prophecy of Christ's love for us.

Mic. 1:3 speaks of "the Lord cometh forth out of His place (the temple, v. 2), and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth". This probably has primary reference to the Angel going forth from the temple to slay the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time. See on Ps. 78:60

4:5 his god- see on Is. 19:18

Describing our final gathering to judgment it is prophesied: "I will assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out" (Mic. 4:6). This is all very much the language of limping Jacob being gathered home. But in him we must see all of us.

As in the prototype with Sennacherib, the destruction of Gog at the second coming will be by Angelic means under the command of Christ. The enigmatic Mic. 5:5 maybe refers primarily to Hezekiah's influence of Angelic forces in leading to the destruction of the Assyrian invader. This would point forward to Christ's use of the Angels to destroy Gog: "This man (Hezekiah/ Jesus) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian (Gog) shall come into our land. . . then shall we raise against him seven shepherds (an Angelic title in Ps. 80:1 and Is. 63:9-11; cp. the seven eye-Angels of Zechariah and Revelation), and eight princes of men"- another Angelic reference, seeing that "the prince of Persia" in Daniel was an Angel. Maybe this implies that the Angels will use other nations as a means of defeating Gog. The primary reference may be to Rabshakeh hearing a rumour of foreign invasion (e. g. by Tirhaka of Ethiopia) and having to return to his own land (Is. 37:8,9). This will be repeated in the last days by the northern invader hearing disturbing tidings from the east and north (Dan. 11:44). It seems hard for these tidings to be about Christ and the saints, who will have come to Jerusalem; in any case, how can the body of Christ be in two places at once? It would be more fitting if they referred to tidings of human armies; perhaps those of the Western bloc? Some schools of prophecy have seen similarities between Britain and Ethiopia (the particular nation mentioned as creating bad news for the original Assyrian king of the north). Perhaps it is to the seven Angel-spirits of Revelation and Zechariah that Micah refers: "When the Assyrian shall come into our land. . . shall we raise against him (in warfare, the Hebrew implies- cp. Obadiah 1) seven shepherds, and eight princes of men" (Mic. 5:5). The only beings to fight the Assyrians were the Angels who slew them, seeing that the Jews scarcely fired an arrow in anger at them. Both "shepherd" and "prince" are Angelic titles (see Ps. 80:1; Is. 63:9-11 and Josh. 5:14; Dan. 10:13;12:1 respectively). The Angels could be "princes of men" as those in Daniel were both princes of Heaven and also of human nations, e. g. Persia.

7:1 Micah 7 is a prophecy shot through with Messianic allusion. Christ openly quoted Mic. 7:6 concerning himself and His men in Mt. 10:35,36. Mic. 7:1 is alluded to in Mt. 21:19; 7:4 in Mt. 7:16. There are many references to Christ's betrayal and arrest: "They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net" (7:2 = Jn. 8:59; 10:31,39; 11:8). "The prince (Herod) asketh (for a sign, Lk. 23:8), the judge (Pilate) asketh for a reward; and the great man (Caiaphas the High Priest) he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up" (7:3), i.e. hatch their plot together. Because of

this, "the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh" (7:4 = Lk. 19:44). "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide (reference to Judas- Ps. 55:13): keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom" . This begins a reference to Samson's experience with Delilah. "I will look unto the Lord (Samson first used the Yahweh Name when he cried in his final suffering)...my God will hear me (cp. "Hear me this once")... rejoice not against me, O mine enemy (the Philistines mocking Samson): when I fall, I shall arise (Heb. elsewhere used about the resurrection); when I sit in darkness (Samson sitting in blindness in the prison), the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him (Samson's thoughts, surely), until he plead my cause ("Remember me!")...he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy (Delilah, symbol of the Philistines to Samson) shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me (as Delilah did?), Where is Yahweh thy God? mine eyes shall behold her (is this Samson imagining the judgment, with restored eyesight?)" . If these connections are valid- and it is hard to deny this- then Samson died full of vision of the resurrection, judgment and the final manifestation of his forgiveness which he would then receive. Paul likewise has plenty of these references in his final writings in 2 Tim. 4. One question remains: why are there these Samson references in a prophecy of the Lord's betrayal? Surely Samson was a type of Christ. It could be that the Lord Jesus was being warned, prophetically, of how a particular woman could be his undoing, as she was Samson's. The way the Messianic Proverbs warn the Son of God against a particular woman lend weight to this. Or it could be that in the same way as Delilah betrayed Samson, so Judas was to betray Jesus, and He would go through the same gamut of emotions. This would be why this prophecy of His betrayal is described in terms of Delilah's betrayal of Samson.

7:9 There are an interesting set of allusions to David's sin with Bathsheba in Micah 7, almost leading us to wonder whether Micah too had a *femme fatale* in his life- whom he speaks of in Mic. 7:10 as "she that is mine enemy...shame shall cover her". He says that "I have sinned against the Lord" (Mic. 7:9), using the very same words as David does in 2 Sam. 12:13; and he marvels how God 'passes by' transgression (Mic. 7:18), using the very same Hebrew word as is found in 2 Sam. 12:13 to describe how God "put away" David's sin. And there are many references throughout Micah 7 to David's Psalms of penitence. Could it be that David's sin and repentance served as a personal inspiration to Micah, as well as being held up as the inspiration to all God's people to repent and experience the sure mercies which David did?

The destruction of Nineveh by chariots with flaming fire (2:3-5) suggests that the Medes were but representatives of the Cherubim chariots with Angels made as a flame of fire (Ps. 104:4); thus the "worthies" of 2:5 are the Angels, and the work controlled overall by the "Lord of Hosts" (3:5)- of Angels. There are several other examples of human armies being described in Angelic language. Our worst enemies are under Angelic control.

Often, Angels are described in terms of the men, empires or armies they control- the frequent descriptions of human armies in language which refers to Angels too provides proof of this (e. g. Is. 66:15; Ez. 26:7,10; Joel 2:5; Nahum 2:3,4,13). Nahum 3:3 RV speaks of how the Assyrians will come with the noise of wheels, as prancing horses, jumping chariots, and "the flashing sword" (RV). This is all cherubim-Angel language. The Angels behind those nations and armies were manifested through them, and this there is the use of such similar language. In the same way, the description of the

beasts are relevant to the nations they represent, and also to the Angels which control them. Rev. 9:11 provides another example

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens. . his brightness was as the light, he had horns. . . burning coals went forth at his feet" (Hab. 3:3-6) is full of Angel-cherubim language, implying that the people of Israel were led by the Cherubim through the wilderness, even if not fully visible to them. Thus the Angel leading Israel out of Egypt is a type of Christ's second coming, as the sun of righteousness. This passage is painting the picture of a sunrise (see NIV)- which fits in with the picture of Christ's return in Mal. 4:2.

Hab. 3:10 waters- see on Rev. 16:5.

Zeph. 2:2 urges Israel to repent "Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass. . the day of the Lord come upon you". It may well be that this is referring to God's decree to the Angels to begin judging Israel.

The Angels were zealous for the restoration to proceed, and therefore influenced the people as far as they could to be zealous for it too. They did this in various ways- e. g. by direct rebuke through the prophets whom they inspired: "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built" (1:2). The context of this, according to Ezra 5:1, was of the people losing heart in the rebuilding because of the opposition from the Samaritans and the temporary ban on the work from Babylon. They argued: 'We'll do God's work if we get the chance, but this ban is clearly a sign from God not to go ahead'- when really it was their self-satisfaction with their "ceiled houses" (1:4) that made them give up so easily. But the Angels were eager to go ahead! The paltry excuses for shirking the Lord's work today are no better. As ever, they stem from the apathy born of materialism, but are wrapped up in pseudo-spiritual reasoning. The satan Angel that caused the 21 day-year delay in the rebuilding (Dan. 10:12,13; Zech. 3:1 etc.) was maybe representing the apathy of the Jews as well as the opposition of the Samaritans in the court of Heaven. The two Angel chariots sent to overcome this opposition (see notes on Zech. 6) would therefore have tried to influence the Jews to be more genuinely committed to Zion's cause. Part of their work was in the inspiring of Haggai's words (n. b. the many references to "the Lord of Hosts" in Haggai). Again, the context of Ezra 5:1 must be remembered- Haggai prophesied to encourage the people during the 21 year cessation of the rebuilding (details in Ezra 4).

1:12- see on Jer. 23:18,22

2:4 God encourages those rebuilding Jerusalem to have faith because the Angel is still among them: "Yet now be strong. . . and work: for I (the Angel) am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels): according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt (the Angel made that covenant) so My Spirit (Angel) remaineth among you; fear ye not". Similarly Nehemiah recounts the past activities of God's Angel (Neh. 9:19-24) as a stimulus to faith in God bringing them through immediate problems" (v. 32) and to making a rededication of their commitment to Him (v. 38 "because of this we make a sure covenant"). See on Gen. 24:40,56

Despite the apathy of the people, the Angel's encouragement was tremendous: "Be strong, O Zerubbabel. . be strong, O Joshua. . be strong, all ye people. . and work: for I am with you, saith the

Lord of Hosts" (Angels)- 2:4. "My Spirit (Angel) remaineth among you" (2:5), just as the same Angel was with them "when ye came out of Egypt". And with us too.

In common with Ezekiel, Zechariah and Isaiah, Haggai also speaks of the possible glory that could have been at the restoration, but which has now been postponed until the second coming: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens, and the earth. . and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . . the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts" (2:6,7,9). Compare this with what actually happened- the old men wept because the new rebuilt temple was nothing like the former temple.

1:3 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); Turn ye unto Me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts". The triple repetition of "Lord of Hosts" clearly points towards the Angels. 'Turning' back to God has the implication of patching up a marriage: "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? . . yet return again unto Me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:1). This is similar to Jer. 31:32 and Mal. 2:14, where again in an Angelic context God, through the Angel, implies He would be justified in divorcing Israel. Mal. 3:7 seems a parallel passage : "Even from the days of your fathers (cp. Zech. 1:2,4,5) ye re gone away from Mine ordinances (given by an Angel), and have not kept them. Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Angels).

1:8-11 "A man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees"- defined in v. 10,11 as an Angel: "O my Lord, What are these? And the Angel that talked with me said. . . they answered the Angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees". The red, speckled and white horses behind him (1:8; 6:2-7) would therefore also appear to be ridden by Angels- indeed they are called "the four spirits (Angels; Ps. 104:4) of the Heavens" in 6:5. See on 6:5

1:11 to and fro- see on Job 1:7

1:11- see on Jer. 25:11

Zech. 1:11 describes the Angels as walking "to and fro through the earth (Heb. 'eretz'- the land, of Israel), and behold, all the earth (land) sitteth still and is at rest". "They are the eyes (Angels) of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:10). It may even be that the satan Angel of Job was walking to and fro through the land of Israel (going up and down in the "earth"- land) rather than through the whole planet, inspecting the true worshippers (who would only have been located in the area around Israel in all probability). See on Dt. 11:12

Angels pray for more knowledge. They "earnestly desire to look into" spiritual things and seek for signs of the times as much as we do- e. g. "The Angel of the Lord answered and said, O LORD of Hosts (recognizing God's control of the Angels), how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem. . ?" (Zech. 1:12). If we are to made like Angels, this opens up a window into what the nature of eternity will be like.

In Zech. 1:12 "the angel of the Lord" asks Yahweh of hosts "how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem...?". Surely the Angel was representing those of God's people such as Ezra who were

asking God "how long?". And in response to that, the Angel seeks to persuade other Angels ["Yahweh of hosts"] to act. See on Dan. 8:15. "The Angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem"- an Angel praying 'O God of us Angels. . '? Or one Angel asking another Angel? Angels have the same problems grappling with time periods as we do!

1: 13 "And the Lord (of Hosts) answered the Angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words". There is a highly significant connection here with Is. 40, the start of Isaiah's prophecies concerning the restoration. Nehemiah means 'Comfort of Yah'; 'Nehemiah ye, Nehemiah ye My people'. The Angel spoke comfort to Jerusalem through the words and work of Nehemiah.

1:14 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion (the temple) with a great jealousy". "Jealous" being the same Hebrew word translated "zealous", we see the tremendous zeal of the Angels for the restoration. Hence the ability of Ezra and Zerubbabel to achieve so much, seeing that they worked with the Angel. The pathetic, half hearted response of the Jews due to their obsession with materialism as decried by Haggai, Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah must have been so 'frustrating' for the Angels, who were willing to provide so much power and success for those who would whole-heartedly commit themselves to the work. How many similarities with the new Israel?

1:16 "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: My house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of Hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem". As the Jews literally returned to Jerusalem, the Angel too physically returned to "My house"- where He used to live. To some limited degree the Angel must have literally been in the temple- as Ez. 40 prophesied would happen. However, in the same way as the temple described by Ezekiel was not built on the scale intended by the Angels because of Israel's apathy, so maybe the Angelic presence too was greatly diminished to what it could have been. The presence of the temple Angel in Lk. 1 indicates that He was there to some degree. The Lord of Hosts stretched the line upon Jerusalem by the Angel surveying and measuring Jerusalem as described in Zech. 2, Rev. 11 and Ez. 40-47.

The exact dimensions of the temple given in Ezekiel recall Zech. 1:16 and 2:11, where the Angel accurately measures Jerusalem in preparation for the rebuilding of the temple. In the same way as it is possible to argue that Christ's second coming in AD70 was described in detail but was postponed to the last days because of Israel's lack of spiritual response, it may be that Ezekiel's visions of the temple were what should have been achieved during the restoration, but were re-interpreted and reapplied in later fulfillment.

1:18,19 "Four horns. . . which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem". The number four is associated with the four cherubim Angels- the four types of Angel-controlled punishment explained elsewhere in these studies.

The four horns of Zech. 1:19 would equate with the four living creatures of the cherubim and also of Daniel, and therefore the four nations of Dan. 2. Dan. 8:8 provides an example of these links: "When he was strong, the great horn was broken (see the link between horns and the cherubim- Angels in Hab. 3:3-5; the Angel behind Alexander); and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of Heaven". This would therefore describe the division of Alexander's Kingdom between four Angels- the "notable ones" or "winds", each of whom controlled one of Alexander's succeeding generals. His

Kingdom was "divided toward the four winds of Heaven" (Dan. 11:4)- the Kingdom was not literally scattered throughout the world, but divided to four Angel-winds.

1:20,21 "Four carpenters. . . are come to fray them (the four horns), to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it". The four carpenter Angels "frayed" the horn Angels which had scattered Israel. For another example of Angels casting out other Angels from a previous position, see 'Angels and the ending of the Law' in Chapter 12. The Hebrew for 'fray' means 'to hasten (with anxiety), to frighten'. Thus one group of Angels hastens the fulfilment of other Angels' work; hence in v. 12 an Angel prayed to the Lord of Hosts (Angels) encouraging them to end their indignation because the 70 years were ended. Similarly the Comforter Angel says that Jerusalem has "received of the Lord's hand (Angel) double (i. e. too much?) for all her sins" (Is. 40:2), and that her warfare ('appointed time') has ended, or expired. The phrase "appointed time" is the same word translated "host", used concerning the Angels, thus indicating that the period of the captivity was under Angelic control. Thus Dan. 10:1 also points out that "the time appointed was long"- implying too long, seeing that "the thing was true"?. This helps us to explain Angels being in some ways in opposition to each other in Daniel, e. g. the Angel prince of Persia withstanding another Angel in His action because of the need to execute a certain time period first.

In chapter 2 an Angel begins to prepare judgements on Jerusalem, but is interrupted by another Angel who describes God's plan to restore Jerusalem, and quickly corrects the impression made on Zechariah by the first Angel. 2:1 "A man with a measuring line"- the Angel of 1:16; cp. Ez. 40:3; 47:3; Rev. 21:15-17 and the idea of "the measure of a man, that is an Angel". Measuring is a figure of judgement- e. g. "judge not. . . for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (Mt. 7:12); "shall I come unto you with a (measuring) rod?" (i. e. in judgement- 1 Cor. 4:21). 2:3 continues: "The Angel (i. e. the one doing the measuring) that talked with me went forth, and another Angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run (i. e. run back), speak to this young man (the observing Zechariah), saying, Jerusalem shall yet be inhabited".

2:3 See on Is. 37:36

2:5 especially has reference to the Angels' part in the restoration: "I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her". As the Angel had been a pillar of protecting fire to Israel previously, He would be to them instead of a physical wall as they started rebuilding Jerusalem amidst great opposition, with no physical wall to protect them.

The Angelic language continues: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . . I will come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee" (2:8,10)- i. e. the Angel would physically return to Jerusalem (the temple? In which case this has yet to be fulfilled). The primary fulfilment of this was in the return from Babylon- the Angel led them back across the deserts, physically moving with them, to enter Jerusalem. This would explain the restoration from Babylon in terms of the wilderness journey and the Angel's guidance of them then- because this very same Angel was involved in leading them through a different wilderness, back to Israel.

The Angels are especially sensitive to affairs relating to Israel. The Angel-eyes of the Lord are ever upon the land of Israel. God likens those who oppress Israel to someone touching His eyeball ("the apple of Mine eye", Zech. 2:8). The Angels as God's eyes are thus very sensitive to Israel's natural and spiritual state.

A theme of Zechariah's early prophecies is the opposition between groups of people, individuals or Angels who want to rebuild the temple and restore Israel, and adversaries to them. Thus in chapter 1 there are the carpenters opposed to the horns, and the Angel who wants to measure (judge) Jerusalem being countermanded by the Angel who decrees that Jerusalem is to be inhabited in chapter 2. This is continued in chapter 3:1 by the vision of Joshua and satan standing before the Angel. It is suggested that this 'satan' is an Angel (we are familiar with satan Angels from 1 Chron. 21:1 and Num. 22:22 at least); this is because groups of people, even evil ones, have their viewpoint represented or brought to the notice of the court of Heaven by a satan Angel- a 'devil's advocate', as it were! The satan Angel "resists" the Angel representing Joshua. The resisting was during the 21 year period when the temple rebuilding was suspended (Ezra 4:24). This corresponds to the 21 days (years), during which the Angel prince of Persia resisted Gabriel's work of rebuilding (Dan. 10:13). Taking this further, this 21 day-year period is the same as the three weeks (21 days) which Daniel spent praying for the rebuilding to commence. Somehow the period Daniel spent praying was over-ruled; there is a sense of time in the court of Heaven, and probably will be in the Kingdom too (e. g. Zech. 14:16). His prayer was answered from the first day he prayed (Dan. 10:12), but despite one Angel being eager to answer it, another opposed it.

3:1 "And He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and satan standing at His right hand to resist him". The prayers offered by Joshua the high priest came before the Angel to whom all prayers go initially, in the form of an Angel presenting his case; whilst the satan Angel opposed Him. He was a satan by reason of representing the Samaritan opposition. In our notes on Jer. 24:1 we suggested that the two baskets of figs placed before the Angel in the temple laid the basis for this vision. The baskets represented the faithful and apostate Jews. The Joshua Angel would have represented the faithful Jews eager to rebuild Jerusalem, whilst the satan Angel would represent the apostates whose very existence militated against God answering the prayers of the rest of Israel. Does the same principle apply to Israel after the spirit- that the apostasy and apathy of some hinders the answering of the common prayers of the others? And our common prayer is surely for the second coming and the greater restoration of the true temple.

3:2 "And the Lord said unto satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee". The Angel-Lord (Jude 9) says that despite the sins of the bad figs in Israel and the opposition of the Samaritans, His choice of rebuilding Jerusalem will stand. Jude 8-10 lends support to this line of interpretation. Jude says that Michael the Archangel did not "bring a railing accusation" against the satan Angel, nor did He "despise dominion" (another Angel-ruler) or "speak evil of glories" (AV: "dignities"; the same word is in Jude 24 "the presence of His glory"- the Angels). This marked lack of aggression which Jude emphasizes shows that there was no conflict between the Angels, as may be wrongly inferred from the severity of the English word "rebuke". Our demeanour generally, especially with each other when it is necessary to have divergent opinions, or to correct others' ways of executing God's purpose as they see it, should be done in the same mutually loving spirit. Notice how Jude 8 links the satan of Zech. 3 with a "dominion"- a ruler or 'prince'. The satan Angel who resisted the Joshua Angel for 21 days is "the prince of Persia" in Dan. 10:13. "The Lord

that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee; is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?". Another allusion in Jude (v. 23) interprets this: "Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh". The implication is that the Angel just about decided in favour of saving Jerusalem out of the 'fire' of eternal punishment (cp. Jer. 17:27) for her sins- He had "compassion, making a difference" (v. 22). The "garment spotted by the flesh" must connect with the "filthy garments" worn by Joshua as he came into the Angel's presence.

3:4,5 The Angel "answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee. . . so they (the Angels that stood by). . . clothed him with garments. And the Angel of the Lord stood by". Does this mean that the Angel commanded other Angels to arrange Joshua's forgiveness and to end his being "polluted from the priesthood" (due to lack of proven ancestry and the high priestly garments), in order that the prayers he presented should be more powerful? This would explain why he was given both a mitre and garments (v. 5). In passing, why did Zechariah suggest giving him a mitre (v. 5)? The greater Joshua was also clothed with a change of nature by the Angels (as outlined in Rev. 4 and 5).

3:4- see on Lk. 19:24

Rev. 4 and 5 describe the important part that the Angels had to play in welcoming Christ into Heaven on His ascension, and in giving Him then His full reward and glory. Having been so intensely involved in His every literal movement, this is understandable. Zech. 3:4,5 describes the same scene: "Joshua (Jesus) was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel. And He (the Angel) answered and spake unto those (Angels) that stood before Him saying, Take away the filthy garments (human nature?) from Him. . they (the Angels) set a fair mitre upon His head, and clothed Him with garments. And the Angel of the Lord stood by". Perhaps the one Angel supervising this glorification of Jesus in Heaven was Gabriel, who appears to have been Christ's personal guardian Angel. God raised Jesus by His own right hand (Acts 2:33)- an Angelic phrase. Angels were visibly associated with Christ's resurrection and ascension.

It is possible to show that the Angels are described as the "fellows" of Christ by a careful comparison of Zech. 3:4 and 8, where the dedication of the High Priest ceremony is performed on Christ (in vision) by His "fellows" or Angels. Although it is not mentioned in Zech. 3, that ceremony included anointing. Thus Heb. 1:9 describes Jesus as being anointed "above thy fellows" in the context of proving His superiority to the Angels- i. e. His fellows.

3:7 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep Mine ordinance (of Lev. 18:30 about the abominations of the surrounding nations). . . thou shalt also judge My house. . . My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these (Angels) that stand by". "My house" refers to the Angel dwelling in the temple; the offer of places to walk among the Angels is the same idea as being "made equal unto the Angels" in Lk. 20:35,36.

3:8- see on 4:14

3:9- see on Ex. 25:19

The "seven lamps are the seven eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zech. 4:2,10)- i. e. they represent the Angels active in the land of Israel to enable the restoration.

They are energized by the spirit in the bowl. The candlestick being part of the tabernacle was therefore also a "pattern of things in the Heavens"; it represented how the Heavenly organization of Angels works.

4:2- see on Jer. 1:11,12

4:4- see on 4:14

4:6- see on Jud. 14:6

4:6,7 David's mocking "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine?" matches " Who art thou, O great mountain?" which was to be destroyed " not by might..but by My spirit" (Zech.4:6,7), as Goliath was killed by David without a sword in his hand, i.e. not by human might. Note that the Philistines were pitched on a mountain, comparing with the description of Babylon as " O great mountain" . See article "David and Goliath" in 1 Sam. 17.

4:10- see on Jer. 1:11,12; Zech. 1:11

The olive trees "are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (v. 14). The "Lord of the whole earth" is the Angel of 3:1 (making "the God of the earth" in Rev. 11:4 also an Angel). The olive trees actually stand by the candlestick, thus making the whole arrangement of bowl, branches, pipes and lamps represent the workings of the one Angel- in the same way as the Angel of Jesus in Rev. 1 can somehow stand in the midst of a candlestick. The olive being a symbol of leadership (in Judges 9:8 the olive tree was the first tree to be thought of as a national leader), it would be fitting that they represented Joshua and Zerubbabel. However, there is a definite allusion to the Angel cherubim here. "Within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree" (1 Kings 6:23); "and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two (olive tree) cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony" (Ex. 25:22). If the olive trees are like the Cherubim, then "the Lord of the whole earth" of Zech. 4:4 which was between them connects with the ark- the Angel that dwelt over the ark, between the Cherubim. Josh. 3:11-13 also makes the connection between the ark and the "Lord of all the earth". The candlestick therefore represents the Angel co-ordinating the restoration, as well as the other "seven" Angels in His control. This shows the close association between the Angel-cherubim and Joshua and Zerubbabel. Thus from the Angelic inspiration of these two men, the spirit was supplied to the candlestick through the gold pipes- the faith they showed and their prayers supplied the spirit which enabled the seven lamp Angels to act. However, the close link between the two olive trees and the Cherubim Angels once again shows that the ultimate impetus to our faith, prayers and spirituality comes from God's spirit in the Angels rather than from any personal inspiration we may feel. This idea of the flow of the spirit, enabling God's action through the Angels as a result of our prayers, is found elsewhere: "This shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:19); ". . . how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit ("good things", Mt. 7:11) to them that ask Him?" (Lk. 11:13). Thus in the vision of the seven lamps, the prayers and faith of Joshua and Zerubbabel were the oil, the spirit that was supplied to activate the seven lamp Angels that went to and fro in the land of Israel preparing the way for the restoration. However, the olive trees were "sons of oil" (4:14 AVmg)- they were anointed with the oil initially. Is this a dim foreshadowing of the birth of the spirit ("sons of oil")? The oil of the spirit is clearly a symbol of the word- the men of the olive trees were sons of the spirit word through their belief in the word of God

through Jeremiah concerning the restoration. The olive branches emptied the golden oil out of themselves- if we are to have the same victory of faith as Joshua and Zerubbabel, we have to in the same way pour ourselves out in prayer and golden faith. The amount of oil flowing into the bowl determined the amount flowing out of it to the lamp Angels, seeing that there was a constant flow of the oil in the vision. Thus the amount and intensity of our prayers and spirituality affect how brightly the Angels burn in their zeal to fulfil our requests. Notice too the power of the prayers of a small minority of God's people. The two olive branches which feed the bowl are replaced by Christ, the one branch (Zech. 3:8; 6:12), who would provide the Spirit in abundance so that the true spiritual temple could be built- "the branch. . . shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the Lord" (6:12).

5:5 See on Is. 37:36

6:5- see on 1:8-11

The horse riders of Rev. 6 are clearly based on this vision in Zech. 6, and they would therefore be Angels. Zech. 6:5 describes the horses as "standing before the lord of the whole earth"- the mighty Angel of the Cherubim that stands for the land (earth) of Israel. In 1:8 they are behind Him, although He then sends them out to survey the state of the land of Israel. They return to Him, reporting that "we have walked to and fro throughout the earth (land), and behold, all the earth sitteth still and is at rest". Is there any reason to doubt that these Angels literally walked about in the land, albeit unseen, perhaps at a similar speed to which we walk? They walked "to and fro" because it is not in their ability to know the exact situation of a country just from a cursory glance. The comment of the Angel on this was: "I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease" (v. 15)- that were sitting at rest in God's land. This scenario is similar to that in 1 Kings 22, where Angels come and go from God, reporting back information and receiving commands, showing how much the Angel in the myrtle trees, "the Lord of all the earth" (land), was a representation of God Himself.

'Chariots' and the 'cherubim' are linguistically connected, and thus also connected in Biblical usage- e. g. "He rode upon a cherub (chariot)" (Ps. 18:10). The number four has links with the Angel cherubim; John Thomas interprets these "four (chariot) spirits of the Heavens" (6:5) as the same as the four faces of the cherubim. The whole vision is full of Angelic language. "The chariots of God are. . . thousands of Angels" (Ps. 68:17); God makes His Angels spirits (Ps. 104:4). We have mentioned previously that the horses within the chariots also represent Angels (Chapter 3), under the control of the four mighty cherubim Angels. This is similar to Ps. 68:17 describing God's chariots as being full of Angels.

6:6 "The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them". "The north country" must be Babylon (2:6; Jer. 1:13,14 etc.)- those Angels went to minister to the Jews there and to enable the hearts of the Persian rulers to continue to support the work of rebuilding (or is this looking back to the judgements on Babylon in preparation for Cyrus' decree concerning the restoration?). Another group of Angels went toward the South- i. e. the land of Judah (Ez. 20:46,47).

6:7 "The bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and He (the Angel) said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth". The "earth" here is probably 'the land' of Israel- which would have included Babylon, at its proper extent from 'sea to sea'. These Angels, the same as those who originally surveyed the whole area by walking "to and fro through the earth"" in 1:10,11, "sought" permission from the co-ordinating Angel to continue their work.

6:8 "These (two groups of Angels) that go toward the north country (Babylon) have quieted My spirit (Angel) in the north country". The Spirit-Angel that needed quietening in Babylon was perhaps the satan-Angel that was resisting the Angel seeking to further the rebuilding work. He would have gone (literally?) to Babylon to give the "prince of Persia" the idea of banning the rebuilding. The two Angels that quietened Him were those of Dan. 10:12,13- the Joshua-Angel of Zech. 3:1, and Michael who "came to help Me" (Gabriel) in Dan. 10:13. Alternatively, note that Dan. 9:21 describes Gabriel being "caused to fly with weariness"- thus it may have been Gabriel who was 'quieted' or 'given rest' (AVmg.) in Zech. 6:8, implying He was in Babylon trying to enable the rebuilding but needed the support of the other two Angels.

6:12- see on 4:14; Jer. 23:5

8:2 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels); I was jealous (zealous) for Zion (the temple) with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury". The Angel's tremendous zeal for the restoration comes bubbling through. No wonder the Kingdom prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah could have been fulfilled if only the people had worked together with the Angels to their full potential!

8:3 "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem". The physical movement of the Angel back to Jerusalem.

8:4 "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels): there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age". The Angel, v. 3, was to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, i. e. in the temple. Here in v. 4, old men and women were to do so- showing the Angel's close identification with his charges, such as Anna the prophetess who "departed not from the temple" at the time of Christ. As a result of the Angelic work in restoring Jerusalem, the old people who could remember the temple in its former glory when they were taken captive 70 years previously would return to Jerusalem again.

8:6 "If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes (Angels)? saith the Lord of Hosts". The Angel is saying 'Because you find it hard to believe what I can really do for you, I might not do it in reality; but don't think My Angels (eyes) can't actually do it if they want to!'.
"I will encamp about mine house because of the army of him that passeth by [the latter-day Sennacherib], and because of him that returneth. . . the Lord of Hosts (Angels) shall defend them" (Zech. 9:8,15) is all the language of Jacob under threat from Esau, being Angelically camped around.

9:9- see on Jer. 23:5

9:14 "The Lord shall be over them"- as the Angels went over David beyond the mulberry trees (2 Sam. 5:24) and as the Angel in the cloud was over Israel in the wilderness. "His arrow shall go forth

as lightning"- Angel cherubim language. He "shall go with whirlwinds of the South"- the group of Angels sent into "the south" (i. e. Judah) in Zech. 6:6.

9:16 "The Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people"- the Angel is elsewhere styled a shepherd (Is. 63:9-11; Ps. 80:1). "The lord of Hosts (Angels) hath visited His flock the house of Judah" (10:3). Similarly, Israel "went their way as a flock, they were troubled because there was no shepherd" (10:2)- i. e. the Angel was not with them.

9:10 "I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria" (Babylon- they are frequently used interchangeably). Notice the word "again"- as the Angel brought Israel out of Egypt the first time, so He would do it again in the restoration.

10:5- see on Gen. 49:17

10:12- see on 12:5

To some degree a repentant natural Israel will take over the role of the Angels as God's eyes walking up and down and to and fro in the earth (land?). This follows from Zechariah describing the Angels as walking to and fro in the earth (1:10;6:7) and 10:12 describing Israel doing the same once they have been regathered and start to carry the name of God.

Judges 2:1 "And an Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers: and I said, I will never break My covenant with you". The subsequent rebuke of Israel by the Angel makes this passage imply that although the Angel had promised never to break the Covenant, He could and would do so. Later, He did: "And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break My covenant which I had made with all the people. And it was broken in that day" (Zech. 11:10,11). This 'repentance' must make the "I" refer to God manifest in the Angel. v. 6 gives the context: "I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord" (cp. Is. 63:9 regarding the wilderness Angel: "in His love and in His pity" He redeemed Israel from Egypt). Although the Angelic covenant was broken, it is to be re-established: "I will even deal with thee as thou hast done, which hast despised the oath in breaking the covenant (i. e. you've broken the covenant, I'll do the same). Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with thee. . . and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. . . thou shalt receive thy sisters. . . and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy (former) covenant. And I will establish My covenant with thee. . ." (Ez. 16:59-62). This covenant was a marriage covenant. "For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God" (Michael the Angel?), Is. 54:6. This is all referring back to the Angel calling Hagar, showing that God's Angel was figuratively 'married' to Israel; thus it was the Angel who divorced and will take back Israel.

The Angel Michael is described as "standing up" for Israel in the last days (Dan. 12:1); and Zech. 12:4 says significantly "In that day, saith the LORD,. . . I will open Mine eyes (the Angels responsible for Israel- notice the references to them like this earlier in the prophecy) upon the house of Judah", as if Angelic activity on Israel's behalf revives in the last days. The "hand of God" is associated with causing the latter day revival and repentance of Israel, and this is an Angelic phrase: "I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will rebuke thy

judges. . " (Is. 1:25,26). "In that (last) day, the Lord shall set His hand. . . to recover the remnant of His people. . He shall shake His hand over the river. . and make men go over dryshod" (Is. 11:11,15).

12:4 "In that day. . . I will open Mine eyes (Angels) upon the house of Judah"- cp. Michael 'standing up' for Israel in the last days (Dan. 12:1).

12:5 This shows how Angels will be very much in evidence on earth at the time of Jerusalem's surrounding by armies and Armageddon: "The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of Hosts (Angels) their God". Who this 'God' refers to is defined in v. 8: "He that is feeble amongst them (the "inhabitants of Jerusalem") at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord (which will go) before them". This implies that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will have the same power as the hosts of Angels which will have been seen fighting "before them". Thus the Jews will "walk up and down in His Name" (Zech. 10:12) as the Angels are now said to do (Zech. 1:11; Job 1:7).

Jacob's flight into Syria is set up as typical of Israel going into dispersion as a punishment for their idolatry. But they will return, as Jacob did. *Then* Israel will not wear a rough garment to deceive any more as Jacob did, *then* they will have renounced the human side of Jacob and captured his final spirituality for their own (Zech. 13:4).

13:7 "Awake O sword ,against My shepherd. . . smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered". The shepherd here clearly refers to Jesus, but the shepherd elsewhere in Zechariah refers to the Angel- another proof that there was one specific Angel in the Old Testament that foreshadowed Jesus.

The clear parallel between the historical man Jacob and the people of Israel is brought out in Mal. 1:2: "I loved you... I loved Jacob". Had Israel appreciated God's love for the man Jacob, and perceived that he was typical of them, then they would never have doubted God's love for them. And the same is true of us, whom Jacob likewise represents. It can be demonstrated that the weakness of Jacob, morally and even doctrinally, runs far deeper than may be apparent on the surface. Even at the end, despite the level of spiritual maturity which Jacob doubtless achieved, he still had serious aspects of incompleteness in his character. And yet he is held up as a spiritual hero, a victor in the struggle against the flesh. This was (and is) all possible on account of the phenomenal imputation of righteousness which God gave to His Jacob. He was saved by grace, not works; and Malachi appeals to God's people to see in Jacob's salvation an eternal reminder of God's grace (Mal. 1:2; 3:6). Very often, the name Jacob is associated with the way that God sees His people of Jacob / Israel as righteous when in fact they are not (Num. 23:7,10,21; 24:5; Ps. 47:4; 105:6; 135:4; Is. 41:8).

Mal. 1:9 indicates that the Angels even associate themselves with Israel's sins, such is their closeness to them: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Angels). . Beseech God that He will be gracious unto us".

2:7- see on Ecc. 5:1-7

2:14- see on Jer. 31:32

A nice picture of the Angels at work in dealing with our prayers is given in Mal. 2:17: "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words" (in prayer). The Hebrew for "wearied" means to 'exhaust by work'- as if God really makes a lot of effort in considering our prayers. God Himself never wearies- such language is surely more relevant to the Angels? The exhortation to an Israel whose prayers were half hearted and formal repetition needs to be heeded by all of us; and encouragement taken at the great energy expended to deal with our prayers.

3:7- see on Zech. 1:3

"I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your land" (Mal. 3:11) sounds as if there was an Angel called "the devourer" at the time of the restoration, as there was one called "the destroyer" at the Exodus. He was given command to destroy Judah's harvests due to their lack of commitment to God's house; yet He could be rebuked or restrained by God, implying the Angel focused on fulfilling what He was told to do without taking into account any other factors- until God overrode or restrained Him.

Mal. 3:16 describes the acceptable attitude of the minority after the restoration from Babylon in the midst of the general apathy to the work of fully restoring the Kingdom that Malachi, Ezra, Nehemiah and Haggai decried. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him (i. e. in His presence- the Angels) for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name". Note the numerous examples of Angelic language in Malachi 3, not least in the allusions to the wilderness Angel. This "book" (singular) therefore contains a record of our individual works, or good words in the Malachi context. There are other indications that the book contains a record of our individual works and ways: "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). "I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3). Notice how being in the book of life is associated with certain works committed by those in it. This "book of life" was written from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8), although it contains the records of our individual works. "The works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3)- the works and actions that comprise each saint were finished from the beginning, written by the Angels in God's book. The statement in Gen. 1:31 that at the end of the natural creation "God saw everything that He had made. . ." may imply that He saw then everything He would ever make- "the works were finished from the foundation (creation?) of the world". Notice again how the unfathomable system of predestination and foreknowledge is in the hands of the Angels. The Angel wrote the book initially- Moses pleaded with the Angel on Sinai in Ex. 32:32 "Blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book (of life), which Thou hast written" (from the foundation of the world).

A day of fiery trial would result in them not being left "root nor branch" (4:1). These are both clear titles of Christ. By grace, this didn't happen.

