

Afternoon Lesson. Acts 22.

MAY 19 1974
TEXT ACTS 9 V6

A few observations are desirable before we attempt to look at the language divinely inspired as read. First, the manner of his amazing conversion and call by grace. As we have many times mentioned, he was called without an instrument: there was no man here as an instrument. When you think of your Saviour, you have thought of Him in His Passion and death, as we have recently meditated, and with some gracious efficacy,

You thought of Him in the tomb. He is not in the tomb: He is risen, and we have felt something of the holy efficacy of the power of His resurrection. For instance, if we mention as we approach the words, you may be sunk by sin and sorrow into a low place. God's people and servants sometimes are there, in such a low place you feel as we meditated on Thursday, to be almost buried in a grave. It is wonderful what a word from His precious lips can do for you. I am not here to refer to myself, but feeling a measure of this personally recently my eyes lighted on this word; "Let not your heart be troubled." and the power of Christ's resurrection was in that word to me. It brought back to my soul ~~xxxxxx~~ the time some of you will remember, the Sunday I was to baptise the late Mr Derbidge, his wife, and others. I went to bed early, hoping for a word from the Lord and sweet meditation, so I should come in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. About eight p.m. I was in pain, and tossed and rolled about. I thought, the bed is wrong, so I went to another, but it was the same until near midnight, and I knew an operation was before me. It was just before Lord's Day. Some say; Appendicitis; very simple. However, nothing is to be made light of. I knew it might be life or death and there was a little family, this flock, and I was single handed in everything. All must stop, and presently I found myself being carried downstairs on the stretcher. Christ was there. That is why I am speaking to you concerning the power of His resurrection. He stood by me, and said "Let not your heart be troubled." - You preached from it last Sunday. I gave it to you. It is for yourself." I left you, all my dear ones, my financial affairs in His blessed hands, and I could have gone Home to glory. I had not a single fear. That is the power of Christ's resurrection. It brought me out of the grave and raised me to heaven. That is why I blessed God for something in my own family a little way back: the dear grandmother I never knew, who committed her family into the hands of Christ, and died at an early age. Whatever you commit into the hands of Christ can never be lost. Not one of those were lost: they are all safe Home except one, and he is near the Kingdom. What you graciously commit into the hand of God will never be lost. O the sweetness of this! So we have remarked on the power of His resurrection. The word to me of fifteen years ago had a little of the same influence recently. You know then the

power of His resurrection. Our Jesus has ascended on high; He is enthroned in glory, and from His throne He called Saul. He did not despise His own institution of the ministry, but this was His own personal ministry from the throne in heaven.

There are one or two features of the case we should seek grace to deliver to you. There was an irradiation, and there was a voice. This great light from heaven shone, and the effect of it was blinding yet illuminating. It illuminated his dark soul: it showed him what and where he was. It was blinding: that is to say, it swept away the refuge of lies all his Pharisaism; all he depended on in himself, and he saw the majesty of the glorious Person in His holiness and justice. There was a voice; "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? What is your life? It is a life of persecutor; - the persecutor. You are spending your life persecuting Me." Then his response; "Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." I wanted to observe with you: it would appear from the revelation there was rebellion against the beginning of conviction. There were pricks constantly: a prick; a prick; a prick. God was causing conviction to enter his very spirit. What was the result? Initially, increased rebellion against God. I feel we have a perfect exposition of this when he wrote to the Romans, chapter 7. He gives us an intimate view. He says; "For I was alive without the law once." He knew no application of the moral law to his soul. "but when the commandment came, sin revived, - he reacted violently. - and I died." That was the state he was in. He was rebelling against the conviction of the Spirit in his soul. I have no intention of staying there. We have the fruits of the Spirit beginning to manifest themselves in him. "And he trembling and astonished!" Trembling is a blessed state and case for a poor sinner before God. Daniel when he saw the vision was prostrated on the earth. His comeliness in him was turned into corruption, and he retained no strength. He saw the corruption of his nature. A hand touched him, and set him on his knees and the palms of his hands, and he said; "O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong." To be on one's knees and the palms of one's hands is a blessed spiritual posture, my friends. Don't you think you would love to go through life in that stance of soul on your knees

and the palms of your hands? The Lord touched him again, and he stood trembling. Blessed posture!

So the menace, the terror who caused many to tremble and be afraid, was trembling before the great I AM. *And he trembling and astonished." Why? Because the One he had persecuted he knew to be the Sovereign Ruler, Lord King of kings and Lord of lords. He was astonished at what had taken place miraculously in his life. *And he trembling and astonished said, "LORD," a word of reverence, of complete submission. "LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?" I hope the Lord will bring back to me as I have felt a little of this. "What wilt thou have me to do?" There is a recognition that the Lord is supreme, and has the directing of our lives, our destiny and all concerning us. "My times are in thy hand." He is the great, supreme Ruler; He controls all events, matters, dispensations, creatures, heaven, earth, air, seas, and devils are subject to Him. He controls the dispensations of our lives, our birth and death; times of sickness and of health; times of going to the wilderness to be tempted of the devil: time of trial and relief; times of adversity and prosperity; times of being made sore and being healed. He is the great, supreme Lord. Jacob, blessed character of grace, saw Him in a heavenly vision almost immediately after he left home; poor, lonely, home-loving Jacob, setting out for his long journey of four to five hundred miles on foot. The first night ^{he knew} of the blessed One as he saw the vision: and my friends, do not be surprised, this may be a time of blessing for you. He took stones for his pillow, and there was never a softer pillow for him. He saw a ladder. There is something up, away, and beyond this poor world. It is a dark place through sin and the curse. There is a way, a ladder. What is the purpose of a ladder? To ascend and descend. A ladder, - Christ coming down to the earth: there was a living way to heaven.- descending to the lowest parts of the earth, and ascending far above all things, and a way for us to ascend. O the spiritual content of revelation! Are you on your way up or down? The remarkable thing is; "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way." (Psa.37,23) There is also divine providence. How many rungs have you ascended on the ladder? I believe some of you feel there is only one more before you are Home. The rungs are nearly all below you now; one more and you will be in. I begin

to feel it. O the bliss it must be! one more and then Home!

The point in my mind was, "LORD, King, great supreme, sovereign Ruler." Jacob saw this. God stood above it. He stands above it, ordering, directing, controlling all in our lives for time and for eternity. Are you in trial? God stands above it. Are you in temptation? God stands above it. If you are in trial, He stands above it. "He shall deliver thee in six troubles yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." (Job 5.19) It is not in the hands of man; it is not in your hands; it is not in Satan's hands. God stood above it. Are you in a time of sore temptation, and the devil seems to seize on you, and thrust his darts into your heart? These are real things: it is not playing at religion. There are times the tempter's power to prove. I remember and loved a quaint man of God now in heaven, (I could hardly enter into it, though I knew something of the spirit of it) he was in a path of deep temptation in London, and with the adversary almost every moment, and out of work, and he said it seemed as though the women in the houses held up their children to mock him. You may never have sunk so low, but there is the spirit of it. That is how the devil is. You will feel it sometimes as you ride or walk, as if the devil stands and mocks you as you go by. They jeered up at the Saviour when He was on the cross. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. 27.40) Do you think you will escape, child of God? How wonderful to realise that whatever you pass through, God stands above it, whether it is afflictions or temptations, and presently it is; "Thus far, and no further," "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zech. 3.2) God stands above it, my friends. Take heart; take courage. It is in the hand of God. Man can only go so far, and the devil. God stands above it, and He stands above all to perform His own counsel. Think for instance, of all the antagonism against David. God stood above. His precious life is hated. God stood above it. Saul was never allowed to touch him. Now he is on the throne of Judah and Israel in one kingdom. Your destiny, profession, work, your partner in life, the number of your children and so on; - do you see what I mean? You are brought to say; "LORD", and if you know the meaning of it it means complete submission to His government. You wish to fall into His hands and leave all there. "LORD" It shows you might say "Lord"

and not know the meaning of it. If you really say it, it means; "I am in Thy hands. I wish to have no hand in these things myself." "LORD" I am satisfied that this conveys the concept of his response. "LORD" as if he says; "I am dethroned, in the dust; a worthless sinner. Thou art Lord. All my enterprises, my plan to exterminate the Church is in the dust. All the things I thought to be gain are but dung and dross. Thou art Lord."

To go back to Jacob, - God stood above it. He could leave it there. He promised him land, seed, substance, Christ. "I am with thee." How wonderful is this! Follow the life of dear Jacob. He goes to the land; here are his wives. God stood above it. After twenty years he has substance, and God stood above it. Have you not seen in your path and in providence God standing above? He has ordered your life so you started with nothing and now you have a certain degree of substance. God stood above it. And your home; "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isa.30.21) There is a directive from heaven. I remember before we went to "The Grove" the Lord gave me two words. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." (Psa.37.23) I said; Lord, I am not a good man. On Sunday it was; He gave him the whole land, when he had not so much as to set his foot upon. and I said; Lord, that is me, and I believe we shall go there. I may speak to you in a homely way: Mrs Mary Cornford said at the end of that Lord's Day; "One could build a house on a home on that." This is spiritual, but there is the providential part. Do you see? God stood above it. It came to the day of the auction, and the auctioneer kept on with the rich men. £25 was nothing to them, God shut their mouths. I said Lord, this is the last bid, and down came the hammer. The rich men said; "How foolish we were to let the place go." God stood above it. That is the meaning of "LORD" He is the supreme Ruler. What school you go to; your profession; - the Lord stood above it.

I must give you the word of command. The Lord said to Jacob; "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. And meet Esau? Yes: go back. The Lord stood above it. He is LORD. Do you realise it when you call on Him? Do you think you can arrange dispensation? He is LORD. Times of chastening and of rebuke; the Lord testifying against us; - He is Lord: He has a sovereign right to discipline His

children. So, "LORD" Here comes Esau with a multitude, but "LORD". He sends a host of angels,- God's host; Mahanaim; they surrounded him,- took him in convoy. "LORD"

It is wonderful, my friends, if you know He is your Lord now. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." (Psa 73.23) I tell you, this ship will not go down if you are in that convoy. Sir Ernest Murrant at Blackboys, chairman of the shipping line, had an oil painting of the "Jervis Bay" that went down. You think of your Lord; He is round about you. You will never go down. He is Lord. It is wonderful to me, this one word. "LORD" Your path, trials, afflictions, pain, infirmities, times of distress, He stands above them. He knows what you need for your family, in your soul and body. He is Lord; He never fails, and the beautiful ^{thing} to me is to look up in adoration and feel there is filial relationship: to look up to Him with adoring faith, in holy solemnity and sincerity and say; "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" What is my life for? What is God's plan for my life? Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" I believe there are a number of us feel the strength of these words. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

There are just three sections here to name. The first is those who do not know the will of God. There are some things they know not the will of God in. It is very important for you if the Lord has not made known His will to you in a specific matter, to try to sit still, stand still, be still, by the help of God. Think of what it means to a soul to go forward and say in sorrow and misery; "I did not know the Lord's will. He did not make it plain to me." It is wonderful to know the Lord's will. The other thing is those who do know the Lord's will. He has revealed and confirmed it. You will get a buffeting, but there will never be a miscarriage of divine faithfulness. In the third category are those who not only know the will of God but have seen it accomplished. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord has done it. Amen.
