

21,562-d
LaTAT1

Notes of Sermon preached by our Pastor

on Thursday, June 23. 1983.

So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. Judges 13. vv.19,20.

Two observations beloved friends, as we begin the discourse. You will know in your private devotions and prayerful study of the Scriptures of truth, we have in this book things that are dismal and reveal the baseness of man, even those who were so highly favoured, the Lord's chosen nation. Continually they apostatised, departed from God. You sing - not happily concerning it - and confess,

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love."

When He sheds abroad His love in our hearts there is a flame of love from our souls to Him. The trouble is, we are still in a prison house, bodies of sin and death. We have a company of two armies, two powers, and the old man which is a Scriptural term. We have a proneness, and how mysterious it is - to leave the God we love. For that reason alone, when the Lord is pleased to indulge your soul you will look forward to the time when there is no more proneness to leave Him, no grief in your spirit because of the way you live, because of your solemn proneness to depart, to disobey and leave the God you love. "O Love, that wilt not let me go."

In this book we have an account of apostasies, and remarkable it is there are three things. They apostatised and there was servitude, God's wrath and displeasure, but His people were blessed with repentance and the Lord mercifully intervened and used judges to be instrumental to that end. Do you say, Guilty, guilty, guilty? All who are born again recognise it, and it is a sad thing in life. In the time of love when Christ was so near, you lived close to Him, ran after Him, when He favoured you in the day and in the night, you contemplated life would be

according to that pattern. O this proneness to wander! and then the servitude.

I want to turn to that which is filled with heavenly brightness, divine lustre and so beautiful, so inexplicable it baffles all human sagacity. The Israelites had been delivered into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. I want to turn to the shining time of beauty glory, wonder. The pure holy reason is they reflect the perfections and glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman." What was it? in wrath, in vindictive anger to destroy? No. The Lord appeared in love and mercy and clemency and compassion and grace, in His wisdom and goodness. It may have helped you in life who fear God, to have had brought to your spirit the hymn that has the beautiful refrain,

"This truth to rejoice in, The Lord will appear."

I proclaim it by the power of the Spirit in your hearts and ears. Meditate on it. "This truth to rejoice in." However dark, trying, afflictive your path this is a word of glory, beauty, wonder. It covers the life and experiences of the Lord's people. "This truth to rejoice in. If the Lord brings it to your soul it falls on your spirit and distils as dew, it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. The Lord will appear.

The tide was turning. Soon there would be a flood tide of mercy, peace, grace, blessing, deliverance. What you are in of trouble may go on for a while with no sign, no comfortable hope of the Lord's appearing. You could not testify to any that you had a comfortable feeling of hope in your soul that the Lord would appear. You are dark if you are there. With all the discernment God gives there is a time when you immediately feel comfortably, with a sweet ray of heavenly joy and hope that the Lord will appear for you. I will demonstrate from Job. He was overwhelmed with the mysteriousness of his path, and for a while he could see no comfortable evidence that the Lord would appear for him. As to his salvation he felt the assurance of it. He said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." He could not find God. God knew where he was. "I cannot perceive Him. He sees me. He knoweth the way that I take. It is the right way. When He hath tried me - let me fall into His hand. I need refining - When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." As you follow with

attention are you able to locate the same in your soul and path, and things that deeply concern you, you know that God will bring you forth as gold? There is deliverance the Lord grants in the earth. "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." He knew the Lord would bring him forth as gold.

So there is deliverance, and appearing. The Lord appears. How we hope in the word, "The Lord will appear." He has, many times in all the steps of life. He has appeared for you graciously, providentially, personally and together, as a family, and in little Churches. Often it is at the lowest and darkest that the Lord appears. Let us seek the Lord that this brightness will shine in our souls. The Lord will appear. Concerning the child that should be born the angel said, "And he shall begin to deliver Israel." Deliverance rests on the everlasting love of God, on the Being and character of Jehovah, the perfections of Deity, especially on the Covenant of Grace 'ordered in all things, and sure'. And it rests on the fulfilling of Christ's Covenant engagements and His priestly work of atonement. It rests on the perfection of His obedience to the moral law, His suffering of the curse, His vicarious death and His glorious resurrection. If you feel dark and tried I would say to you, The Lord is risen. He is not in the tomb. "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." And because He is risen you rise with Him. It is wonderful to be delivered in your soul by forgiveness, pardon, peace: and to be delivered in your circumstances by the Lord exercising wisdom, goodness, almighty power and love. "He is able to deliver." Are you heaving a deep sigh?

"He is able to deliver,
And His love is still the same.
Can His pity or His power
Suffer thee to pray in vain?"

What would God do with His great Name, with the exhortations of the Scriptures to His dear people concerning prayer if it was in vain? Your prayers will not be in vain.

"Can His pity or His power
Suffer thee to pray in vain?"

"Wait but His appointed hour,
And thy suit thou shalt obtain."

There is an appointed hour. Abraham was one hundred before the boy was born. Sarah was ninety. Joseph was thirty when he was elevated. Everything seemed to go against him for thirteen years. Wait but His appointed hour. It is the same with all matters in life. "Wait but His appointed hour - the Lord delivers - And thy suit thou shalt obtain."

The angel appeared to Manoah's wife. It is obvious that the angel was the uncreated Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ in angelic form. This is one of the gems of Scripture. "And the angel did wondrously." He did wondrously in His priestly work of atonement. He does wondrously in Heaven now in His work of intercession, mediation, advocacy. What about the new creation, the Church redeemed by blood out of all nations? In all His works, wisdom, goodness, power He does wondrously for us in the planning of providence and in answering prayer. "As for God, his way is perfect." How does the Lord answer prayer? "and the angel did wondrously. Your home, house, business, situation, how the Lord brought you through to advanced ^{years} your health, all concerning you. What word have you for God's praise? "And the angel did wondrously." The time when you were at death's door, in danger of death, and the Lord surrounded you with His protection. What is the word of gratitude and honour to Him? "And the angel did wondrously." And the joy of it is when it is united, involved. Manoah and his wife were involved, as all gracious couples are, in sorrow, distress, tears, praises, adoration together, and in looking on together. There is much to the praise and glory of God. And if the family can join in and look on while the Angel does wondrously, and graciously give all the glory to God.

The Angel, the Lord Jesus ^{had} said to Manoah, "Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord." The word is full of instruction. It was a time of rejoicing, but the Lord is saying, "This is not a festival of entertainment. There is to be a sacrifice. I will not eat of thy bread." There must be a sacrifice. He is teaching them the atonement, the way of His appearing; how He will deliver His people by a sacrifice, not a festival. "So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon

a rock unto the Lord." The kid was a type of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God incarnate. The meat offering, the flour and oil and frankincense. You can think of it two ways - the gratitude and praise of His dear people to Him. And frankincense - the sacred merits of the Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven. And the meat offering - the precious One who would offer His life a sacrifice and be the Bread and Water of life, (immortal meat) for His people to feed on. The rock is a symbol of His Deity. "And the angel did wondrously: and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame - the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifice - when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar." In the flame of His infinite, glorious merit He ascended to Heaven, and Manoah and his wife looked on. What a revelation of the priestly work of atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful type of His dolorous, vicarious, sacrificial, voluntary, expiatory death. What a wonderful type after His burial, of His glorious resurrection and ascension to Glory. No wonder we read that the Angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. I hope you see it in the gospel, in your soul, path, prayers, exercises, concerns, and are hopefully involved in it together. It is a word of hope, expectation, beauty, glory, matchless worth. "And the angel did wondrously and Manoah and his wife looked on." Are you like that? You have been in it; the Angel has done wondrously. It is a word for the present and the future.

You will know their different reactions. Manoah thought they were going to die. It was as though he had not been fully delivered in his soul. He was not walking in perfect love, for 'perfect love casteth out fear'. His wife had no fear, She said, We shall not die because we have seen the Lord. "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these." She was in a sweet frame. A blessing it is when the wife helps the husband when he is so cast down, or vice versa, and when they help one another. This is God's purpose. "When men are cast down then thou shalt say, There is lifting up." That is the message. "And the angel - be on the look out for this - and the angel did wondrously, and

Manoah and his wife looked on." The consummation of it will be in Glory when we reach it together, to see the Angel who has done wondrously while we looked on, and we shall be as the angels of God. "And the angel of the Lord did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on."