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Sermon preached by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on Sunday
evening 28th. January, 1973

Hymns 984, 717, 418

73/B

Reading: Revelation 4 and 5

Text: Isaiah 27.13

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

I attempted some consideration this morning of what is involved in this verse, and the characters that are particularly referred to as being ready to perish and outcasts; and that it is these particular characters who shall come to know something of the sacred joy of worship. They were not to perish as outcasts in the land of Assyria, or in the land of Egypt, but were to be delivered from, brought out of these countries to worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. As I may be helped now it is my point particularly this evening to refer a little to what is involved in worshipping the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

When the Lord Jesus was here upon earth we read of some who came to Him in their distress, in their affliction and were received by Him. We read of that poor Syrophenician woman who came to Him, worshipping Him, saying, "Lord help me". It does not take long to say it, but where it is really felt in the heart of one ready to perish there can be worship in it. She came worshipping Him saying, Lord help me. That may be as far as some of us can feel we have come, and it is a mercy if we have ever really come just like that poor woman without anything of our own to recommend us, but to come and fall so to speak in faith at His feet saying, Lord help me, because ultimately she got what she wanted. We read also of a poor leper who came worshipping Him and saying, "Lord if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean". He did not say, 'If thou canst'. One did come saying that, and was not very well received, because he doubted the Lord's power. The poor leper came saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean", And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, "I will; be thou clean".

What an amazing thought it is that poor, troubled, afflicted, sin-burdened sinners, feelingly in themselves ready to perish shall come and worship the Lord. These characters come to the Lord Jesus Christ

of necessity, of real necessity, for what they cannot produce themselves or perform themselves. They come as poor, needy sinners, as humble dependants upon His bounty, yet believing He can and will supply them, for we read, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him".

Here it is said that in the day referred to these poor things, ready to perish and outcasts, will hear the blessed Gospel trumpet and shall come and worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem, that is in a Gospel sense, the Gospel church. Jerusalem was the centre of worship under the former dispensation and is a type of the church, so under the Gospel the Lord's dear people worship Him in the holy mount, in the church of God, at Jerusalem. It is a wonderful thing to have any real worship. We may come to the services, and I am thankful that a few still have a mind to come, and our young friends have a mind to come; and it is our desire for them that there may be in it something more than merely coming, but that by the Lord's great mercy and blessing they may be taught by His good Spirit to know what it is to worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. To be a coming one is a great mercy, and there is nothing in the Scriptures to discourage such, in fact they have an invitation extended to them, the Lord Himself said in the days of His flesh, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". There is worship in the coming, there is worship in the rest that is given to these coming ones, especially when the Lord favours them to feel their interest in Him, gives them rest in their souls, and peace and joy in believing. The Lord knows how many coming ones there are in the chapel here this evening, and whether any may have come like the poor woman did, saying, "Lord help me". To have a case is a great thing. A case cannot be met unless we have one to be met, and I believe it will be met if we have one, in the Lord's own time. These people, if we look at it in a Gospel sense, come and worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. This worship is a wonderful thing, it goes all through the Scripture. We read of one and another who bowed their heads and worshipped when the Lord answered their prayers; as in the case of Abraham's servant, who was sent to get a wife for Isaac, and we read of others in a number of cases, and in the assemblies of the children of Israel at times when they were gathered together.

What is this worship then? In the first place it is soul adoration.

It is a poor sinner falling down at the Lord's feet and lifting Him up in humble faith and adoration, giving all praise, honour and glory unto Him. This is the kind of worship that is in heaven, as we have been reading this evening, and is sometimes felt upon earth in the experience of the Lord's people, when the Lord Jesus is felt to be precious and that love flows out to Him from the heart, adoring Him, lifting Him up as it were, giving praise to Him for all that He is, and all that He has done in our redemption. This is sweet, holy adoration, praise; giving praise to God from Whom all blessings flow, giving honour to Him as we have been reading. Sometimes this can be a sacred exercise in the heart of a child of God. You may be favoured at times with a little worship, and very sweet it is, especially when the Spirit of the Lord lifts the Saviour before the eye of faith and the soul is drawn out to Him in holy adoration and praise for a hope in His mercy and for all that He has done for these poor outcasts, poor things which are ready to perish and yet hope that one day they will see Him as He is. This is sweet holy adoration felt in the heart of a coming one.

But there is something else connected with worship in a spiritual sense, and that is a gracious sacred resignation; a falling into the Lord's hands, committing our matters to Him, falling before Him, to be still and know that He is God, and to say in the heart, "Thy will be done". At such a time in your spirit there is no reserve, you fall at His feet resigned to His blessed will, feeling assured that all is ordered well, that He will not fail you nor forsake you, that He will bring you through this wilderness, and ultimately receive you unto Himself. I know we may not often be there, and neither can nature produce such an experience, but this is worship. This is a surrender of ourselves to the Lord. "Thy will be done" - four short words - but yet they involve more than the words can say.

Again in worship there is supplication, as it is in Zechariah, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for him" - Is there not worship in this, in a poor mourning one mourning over sin, his own guilt, ruin, death and poverty, and yet looking by faith to a sin-bearing Saviour Who bare these sins away; when some view of the cost of that forgiveness is felt and seen by faith in the wounds and blood of our Saviour and Redeemer. They shall look upon me whom they have pierced".

Then there is communion in this worship. Two parties come together - the Lord and a poor sinner, they come together. This is beautifully set forth in the Song of Solomon by the Lord going into His garden and eating His pleasant fruits. This is communing with His people, revealing Himself, showing Himself through the lattice and so on. There is a coming together then and it is a sweet communion. Have we not this in the Revelation where the Lord says to the church at Laodicea, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me". This is communion; this is worship; the Lord is no stranger in this instance, there is a knowledge of Him by the Holy Spirit. I realise that we may feel to come very, very short in some of these things, but there are moments I believe when this worship can in a particular way be very sacredly felt. Faith gets a view of Him. There is a little lifting of the veil for a moment, faith sees something of His beauty, and you are drawn to Him as your best beloved, you may feel and say, "My beloved is mine and I am His". He feedeth among the lilies. This is communion. How sacred it is!

Worship may be considered in another aspect and that is in a public way when the Lord's people are gathered together for the services of the sanctuary. Have we not this in Psalm 29, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness". In a proper sense I believe we can say that to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness is to worship Him in Christ. It is worshipping the Father in Christ as the Lord Himself said, "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". Sometimes there is a little of this in the sanctuary, have we not felt it here at times? One could not say always, but I believe here and there, we have felt a little unction, and Christ has been present and precious in the view of faith, and felt to be in the heart the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. And if it is in the service of the sanctuary, yet it is in the heart; for it is heart worship. We can be engaged in the outward form of worship, without always feeling inward worship; but sometimes we do feel it, I am sure we do for I have felt it myself, and perhaps I might just turn aside and say that I felt it the other day at the funeral of our late friend Mrs. Cottingham, when we had that hymn at the funeral service:

"My soul, this curious house of clay,
Thy present frail abode,
Must quickly fall to worms a prey,
And thou return to God."

I hardly remember having quite the same feeling that I had when we were singing that hymn, it seemed so sacred. It was quietly, feelingly sung and the tune was suited to the language; I felt there was worship in it. How sweet this is. I believe there have been many times with the Lord's family when they have really felt a spirit of worship in the hymns we sing. O how sweet some of them have been at times in the heart.

But it is not necessarily in public worship. It is when the Lord appears. It can be in the night season when the heart is going up to Him with some feeling; but even so the Lord does own His appointments, and it is very sacred to have contact with God, and it is very solemn. It is a great mercy to have a religion with God in it. It is right to observe a due order in our different services as we do, but this inward spirit of worship is peculiar, it is particular, and it is very sweet. I know it is, I have felt it quite a number of times in my life, at Brighton and sometimes here, as I have mentioned. What an amazing mercy it is and what a wonder it is, that poor worms of earth may have contact with the Majesty of heaven and worship Him! This worship is in a flowing together of the graces of the Spirit, not just one particular grace as separated from another. The graces of the Spirit flow together - faith, hope, love, repentance, sorrow, grief and joy, they all flow together to the goodness of the Lord, and this is worship. What a wonder it is to have our heart touched by a sense of the Lord's favour. This is set forth in the case of Ruth and Boaz, when Boaz took notice of Ruth. It is very sweet to feel contact. The Lord never despised a poor, coming sinner, however bad their case may be. Where there is godly repentance felt in the heart, worship is in it. Where there is love to a precious Christ, worship is in it; and where there is some sweet communication of His favour toward us, worship is in it.

They "shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem". What do we really feel that we can say about this? Have you known these times of worship? I do not doubt, as far as the ordinances of the Lord are concerned, that you have said I have come and gone and felt nothing; that may often have been so; yet, has there not been here and there an occasion when the Lord has come, the heart has been softened, a little repentance has been felt, and grief for grieving Him. Some sight of Him has been given and you have looked upon Him Whom you have pierced, mourned over your sin and after Him. O how sweet it is to fall at His dear feet and in our poor humble way, even while we are here below, to crown Him Lord of all!

But there is another aspect of this worship that surpasses anything we can know down here, and this is in the heavenly Jerusalem of which we read this morning in Hebrews 12 where the Apostle says, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched..but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" - that is in the spirit - "and to an innumerable company of angels..And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling". I have often been very much struck by what I have read this evening - John in his vision saw "a Lamb as it had been slain", The exalted Saviour, may I say without being imaginative, as John saw Him there shows the marks of His agonies. O what a wonder of wonders it will be to be there one day! For this is the heavenly Jerusalem, not the church of God upon earth, but the church of God in heaven; how many are there we shall never know, but we understand that they are a multitude whom no man can number of all nations, people and tongues, and are still increasing and will be until the whole elect of God shall be gathered in before the throne, to cast their crowns before the throne, and crown Him Lord of all. I feel like this, that if we know anything of worship here in a spiritual sense we have in some measure the earnest of the worship that is there in heaven.

"Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles;
Where God unveils His blissful face,
And looks, and loves, and smiles."

O what must it be to be there? For there, worship is purer, sweeter and will be everlasting; the crown is cast before the Throne for ever and ever. Words cannot convey what heaven is, but this we know, that they are completely blessed, and will be for ever. We read of that city that there will be no night there, no more sin, no more pain sorrow, grief or death for the former things will have passed away. O what a wonderful mercy it is for a poor sin-burdened, sin-convicted sinner to feel a hope of heaven, really to feel it! It is something particular, not just something to conclude in our minds, it is something particular, it is a sweet and blessed hope that is felt, a hope that has worship in it. There is worship in the prospect, in looking forward. If we know Him here savingly then He will not be a stranger to us there, as an old friend said when walking on his way to Patcham, he had a particular view by faith of the Lord Jesus. "I had such of sight of Him that when I see Him in heaven He will not be a stranger", and I believe He will

not be a stranger to some of us. O to get that sight of Him. These characters that feel in themselves ready to perish and outcasts now in the land of Egypt shall come. This is a blessed "shall", not they "may" if they like, it is up to them, but they shall come. Almighty grace overcomes all nature's objections, is a compelling power, They shall come for they know that if they stay away they must for ever perish. They shall come and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

May the Lord then favour us sometimes with a little of this worship in our souls. It does not matter where we are, whether we are washing up or what we are doing. Sometimes there can be just a little worship; I know this is real. Sometimes it is felt in the heart in the ordinances of the sanctuary, and sometimes it is felt under some sweet view of that glorious One, and if this is really so one day we shall see Him as He is without a veil between, and we shall go no more out. It will not be coming and going. Once we are there we are there for ever. But it is an important vital question,

"Prepare me gracious God,
To stand before thy face"

If we are prepared here we shall stand there. May the Lord look upon us then, grant this blessing to us, and favour us sometimes here, as I believe He has done, and I trust He will do, then we shall say as it is in the Song, "My beloved is mine and I am His"; a blessed prospect a good hope through grace, not to be disappointed, that one day we shall realise in open view all that faith and hope has felt here, as the Apostle John says, when we shall see Him as He is, we shall be like Him, that is like the risen body of the ascended Saviour. Amen.

