

1351 v

LaP 872

665

Hymns: - 1) 366 2) 214 3) ~~1068~~ 1068.

Reading: - Genesis. Ch. 16 and 1. Chronicles Ch. 5. verses 15-20

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham

at Galeed Chapel Brighton

on Sunday morning 25 November 1923

LIBRARY OF THE

GOSPEL STANDARD BAPTIST

Read at Miford - 28/3/2004.

1 CHRONICLES 5 v 20

"And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and He was intreated of them: because they put their trust in Him."

The context tells us the history of this passage. "The sons of Reuben and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, were four and forty thousand seven hundred and three score, that went out to the war, and they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish and Nodab." These Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish and Nodab, were the descendants of Hagar, of Ishmael and they dwelt in the land that was given to the two and a half tribes, trans-Jordan tribes, of Israel, and it was long before they were subdued, but these two and a half tribes at length made war with them and in the battle it would seem that they were, in the beginning, hard put to it. Defeat probably appeared inevitable but they did that which brought help; they cried to God. The best thing that any person, any people, any nation can do, in trouble, in difficulty; pray. You young people, even if you naturally feel that there is a God in heaven, and difficulties and troubles come to you, if disaster appears inevitable, do that that is in the mind, in your mind, cry to God. The young lions cry and God hears. Cry to God; He will help. Even naturally, He will help. And godly people in their difficulties and troubles are led and enabled to cry. When the Lord God moves by His Holy Spirit on their hearts, faith rises and they take hold of His strength and get victories which otherwise would have been impossible. "They were helped against them". Human prowess alone wont do. This, every child of God believes. So many noughts are of no value until an initial figure is put before them. We are noughts, we are helplessness, but if we have faith, that will stand. Where other

things, human assistance and strength, and schemes, and plans, and unions, fail, this will stand. "And the Hagarites were delivered into their hand and all that were with them, for they - these two and a half tribes - cried to God in the battle." When they were in it, when disaster seemed to be coming, when the strength of their enemies appeared greater than their own, then "they cried to God in the battle" - not before only, but in the conflict, the Lord's people have to cry - "and He was intreated of them because they put their trust in Him." They found that faith was never dishonoured; that prayer was never, never unanswered. And you will find in your troubles and difficulties that your faith and your prayer will not be turned back, but be honoured.

Leaving this external, this literal aspect of the case, I would a little look at the matter that may be before some of you, that will occur to your minds. There is a spiritual view that may, without any over-spiritualising, be taken of this word, for we read of Hagar that she was a type. She was typical and this warrants one to notice the spiritual aspect of this word. The Apostle Paul in the chapter I read just now tells us that Hagar is in bondage with her children and answers to Jerusalem then which was in bondage, but that the people of God have a liberty, a liberty which is only known to them by the ~~indwelling and operation of the Spirit. Now there are two things~~ in respect of these Hagarites, or of Hagar, which we will notice. First of all, there was the spirit of mocking. When Isaac was weaned, Sarah saw Ishmael mocking. The second thing is, there is bondage. Now let us notice these two things as being in the experience of the Lord's people, and then also observe what is done in the conflict - "they cried to God in the battle". And in the next place see what follows that cry to God - "and He was intreated of them because they put their trust in Him."

First of all there was in Ishmael this dreadful spirit, this wicked spirit of mocking at the solemnities attending the weaning of Isaac. The family festivity was marred and probably a violent scene followed the mocking of Ishmael who would probably know that he was to be displaced by Isaac born some years after he was. "What will ye see in the Shulamite, as it were the company of two armies." Do not expect to have only one voice and one spirit and one aim and one

direction in you. You must wait for heaven to be just only, and always, one, in one direction, and having one spirit, and one love. In the Shulamite you see as it were the company of two armies and likely enough I express the painful experience of every <sup>exercise a person</sup> (child of God) here, when I say that the mocking of Ishmael is known. Each of you must know something at least of this powerful spirit. Our depravity will plague us as long as we live, and part of our depravity is an utter enmity to God and godliness. And if any of you who fear God have escaped the mocking spirit of Ishmael thus far, pray that you may escape it to the end, but it may be that most of you will say that perhaps at your most sacred moments, in your retired moments, when you were seeking the face of God, Ishmael came forth and mocked at your solemnities; mocked when you were seeking God. Perhaps he asked you if you really believe there is a God. He may have asked you if you honestly bent the knee of your heart to God; if you believe in the Person of Jesus Christ; if you believe in His vicarious atonement; if you believe that a sinner must eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ or have no life in him. And at these, your solemnities, he may mock; have a fierce look of enmity, or a devilish grinning at your spirit, at your worship, and a solemn, and painful, and bitter thing it is to have this experience. And what do you do? What have you done at such moments? Fallen in with the suggestions? Been pleased with the laughter? No, you have cried out of necessity to God - Lord, do not leave me to this evil spirit. Do not forsake me in this hour of my need. Grant me power to overcome, to worship in spirit and in truth, and to believe with all my heart the things which my lips have uttered when I have approached Thee, or when I have spoken to Thy saints; when I have made profession of Thy divine Majesty, of Thy glorious Person, Thy finished work. Help me stedfastly to believe that Thou art a rewarder of such a sinner as I am seeking Thee diligently. But if this Ishmael persists in his mocking in you, then you persist in praying, in crying to God for help. "They cried unto God in the battle." The confusion wont hinder any sigh that goes out of your heart reaching the ear of God. The cry wont be prevented from going straight to heaven even though it may go out of a heart that is full of confusion and ready to give in. "Cried to God". "They cried to God in the battle and He was intreated of them" and it wont be long perhaps before you will find a singular quietness on your spirit, and it may be that you will enter into what is written of Joshua in another case.

"The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, even the Lord which hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee", and God will rebuke these Ishmaelites by giving you power against them.

And the second thing to be observed in the Hagarites, is bondage. Hagar answereth to Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children. Bondage is of three kinds, speaking generally. First, bondage to sin; that is a terrible bondage and although the dominion of sin I may say universally is destroyed in every child of God, there is some sin, some master lust, something that persists, insists, that follows, that wont give up, that you will find in your own hearts. "Is it not a little one". There is bondage to some sin at times in the child of God. Though he may be perfectly correct in his life, that no-one is stumbled by his conduct, no professor, no unbeliever stumbled by his conduct, yet in his spirit there is a sore bondage to something. Bondage in the next place is to the law. Under the law a sinner must be in bondage. A child of God is in bondage when the law, in some particular, works in his mind, demanding obedience, commanding perfection, and where this prevails there is no power to look to the end of that which was abolished by the Lord Jesus when He died. It is a sore thing to be in bondage. Those of you who, though born again, are in bondage, are not as yet able to look to the end of that which Christ abolished when He said: "It is finished". There is a general belief in your minds that Christ is sufficient, but that He will be sufficient in you and for you, that is the question, and you cannot look to the end, the glory of the gospel, the glory of redemption, the glory of justification, the glory of sanctification, the glory of union with God in Christ. This glory, you are not able to lay hold of, or even to look at.

There is thirdly the bondage of legal working, the legal working of the mind. When perhaps you attempt to call on God's Name or feel you would wish to do, then rises this kind of feeling; but I am not fit to do it. My heart is too hard, my thoughts are too wicked, my mind is too polluted. I am too unthankful. I am not fit to call upon the Name of the Lord. And this bondage will hold you. Though necessity will squeeze out many cries and the Spirit will beget many groanings which are unutterable, still there is bondage here. A legal spirit injures your soul, dishonours the Lord Jesus, and holds you fast. Now in this

three-fold bondage, let us see what we do. What is the course we take? Let each child of God put the question to himself, honestly look at it. Now what do I do? If you speak as you really live before God you will say, I try to call on Him, I do call on Him, I make known my case, I confess my sin, I deplore my condition, I seek His help. I tell Him that I am afraid I shall be overcome; I ask Him to prevent it. I tell Him that I am an exceedingly feeble person, and that I am a poor believer, if a believer at all, and I ask Him most mercifully to help me. Now here is a branch and a measure of liberty, which I would like to notice for a moment. The liberty is this, that the Spirit of Jesus Christ is in the sinner who feels this bondage to be warring against him, who feels the mocking, and the hardness, and the fear and the holding fast by the law, of him. He feels all these things but there is one thing he is enabled sometimes to do, and that is to name the Name of Jesus Christ in the ear of God. He comes to God in a beautiful way, though himself so far from being what he would be. This is the way he comes to God, by that new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for him through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. He comes by the High Priest, the great High Priest of his profession. He names these things before God and that is why the Lord is intreated of him. "And He was intreated of them". And you will find yourselves constrained sometimes to say He did not turn away my prayer from Him. ~~"By this I know that Thou favourest me, that my enemy doth not triumph over me"~~. And even Ishmael and all the Hagarites that may come with their mocking, and all the bondage that you feel, cannot, never will, overcome you because you trust in the Lord. Is that so now? Cannot some of you really say this is in your favour, that you have a spirit to pray? While in yourself you have no strength against your enemies, no power to overcome them, no prowess even to resist them, but feel that you must sink, that you must give way if God help you not, and then there goes out of your heart this cry - "Lord help me." It is a wondrous mercy that the throne of grace is open to poor sinners in their conflicts; that their indwelling sin, their legal bondage, and the many fears that rise in their hearts, are not against them, as they fear, but that they are means, and good means too, an effectual means of bringing them before the Lord in prayer and supplication.

Now look at what took place with them. He delivered the enemies

of these two and a half tribes into their hand. Does God ever deliver you? Is it always bondage, always fear, always defeat? No, there are moments when you can even say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me." Times when you can say

I'll bear the unequal strife  
And wage the war within

I will bear it in the Name and strength and grace and love and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. He had conflict; I will follow Him. He overcame for me, as I hope; I will look to Him to overcome in me, and then all will be well. "He delivered them into their hands." Now is it not so with you sometimes, that the beautiful, and wondrous, and penetrating light of the gospel beams, shines forth into your heart, and enables you to say, why should I despair of cure and victory? Why should I give way to these legal fears that are so painful and plague me so? There is a Friend in heaven, a Friend of sinners, and I have cried to Him. His precious blood cleanses from sin; I will plead that. His good Spirit who is sent to help the infirmities of His people; I will ask the Holy Spirit to come. Though I am guilty, Christ's righteousness justifies the ungodly. Though I am polluted, His blood cleanses from all sin. Though I have no strength, the grace of Christ is strong. Lord, help me to be strong in that grace as Paul exhorts his son Timothy: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus". Now cannot you follow this and say, that is exactly the course I am enabled to take in my conflict. "They cried unto God" The gospel, O what a gospel it is. What light it sheds in the heart of a sinner sometimes. What beauty it shows in the face of Jesus Christ. What glory of God beams upon the heart sometimes in the midst of conflict, drawing the soul up, giving it new strength, and scattering the guilty and the legal fear that are so painful.

"They cried". If you can mention in the ear of God the Name of the Lord Jesus you will come off well. "If ye shall ask anything in My Name I will do it". And if you shall ask the Lord to overcome these Hagarites that are in your heart, He will be sure to overcome them for you. "He was intreated of them". He heard their cry, He heard them express their fears as they saw these hordes coming against them, and

they felt their strength going and their plans, as it were, being overthrown. Now they had one last resource. Blessed be God that has never failed; that never will fail.

Look at the last word: "Because they put their trust in Him." God will never forget one act of faith that a child of His puts forth; never neglect one cry of faith that goes up to heaven from a poor, weak heart. Will never turn away His face from the prayer of His poor, believing people. "Because they put their trust in Him." Now for a few moments, and it can only be few, let us look at this great point, faith in God. "Because they put their trust in Him." What is your trust? I doubt not that the answer, the mental answer of every child of God is, that whenever he can and does put any trust in God, it is in the Person and work and intercession of the Lord Jesus. That all the hope, all the expectation of help, that a child of God ever feels, he feels through the Person and the work and the intercession of the Lord Jesus. Because they trust in Him, God is pleased. Rivers of oil, whole forests, all the beasts of the wood offered in sacrifices; the fruit of the body added thereto; God is not pleased with. But the work of faith in a heart that is burdened and grieved and wounded and sensibly guilty and weak and ready to fall, that, God is pleased with. This is the work that you shall do; this is the work that pleases God; that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent. Faith in the bleeding Lamb overcame every difficulty, overcame every enemy. "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." So, dear friends, you can take your enemies; take their strength and your weakness; take their well-laid plans and your confused plans; take all to that one place to which God invites His saints: "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." This you will find to be the blessed result. "He was intreated of them", delivered their enemies into their hands. You will find it so yourselves, He is intreated of you. "By this I know that Thou favourest me, because my enemy doth not triumph over me."

And this brings liberty. Christ was anointed to preach liberty to the captives, was sent to open the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God. The year of jubilee when it came, proclaimed liberty to

every captive and returning to his home of every servant who had been serving away. And when this blessed liberty comes, you may depend upon it, you will go quite free, as these two and a half tribes overcame their enemy; took their cattle and slew all their enemies, so many, as we are told in this chapter. And you will find, when you cry to God, and He hears you, that that year of jubilee, of true liberty, has come, and you will find that your enemies are weak and you are strengthened against them. The gospel overcomes the law. Blood removes pollution; righteousness brings justification; the presence of God brings victory to the soul and peace to the conscience and happiness to the mind. There is nothing but sweet liberty for the time being enjoyed when this word is fulfilled. "And He was intreated of them because they put their trust in Him." They put their trust, not in their own sword, but, as it is written in the Psalm: "They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them," (Psalm 43 v 3) and that favour is true liberty. In gospel liberty there are several degrees, and several branches upon which I am not able now to enter, except by just one brief word. There is this degree for instance, access to God. Once banished from Eden, no going back. Once the presence of God lost through sin, no regaining that presence by the law. Bondage, O solemn and dreadful, but when the Lord comes by His good Spirit and works in one who has enemies and fears many, he finds what Paul said to the Ephesians true in some measure: "For through Him we both have access by One Spirit unto the Father"; access by the blood of Christ. Notice that in your own experiences. When you pray, even though you are not fully delivered, notice that because it is a part of the gospel and a branch of the Spirit's work to make His people free among the dead; to give them liberty in prayer, to give them access to the throne of grace. Everyone who gets that has a part and lot in the matter of salvation.

Liberty also has this in it, a power to plead the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Now the law hides that. The law, and bondage by the law, will make you feel the only face you see is the angry, justly angry face of an offended God. The gospel changes all this to the soul and the well-pleased face of God in Jesus Christ is seen, and there is liberty there - "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is



liberty" - because the veil is being removed. The first is being weakened to make room and way for the second. You remark, that whenever God draws near to you and gives you the movings of His good Spirit, you will find you see some of the well-pleased face of God in Jesus Christ.

Another part of the liberty is this, that the invitations and the promises of the gospel will overcome your fears. Whereas your legal fears will say, you are not fit to go; that you are not fit to pray; that your presence before God will be offensive to Him; invitations and promises will say, "The poorer the wretch the welcomer here." I like that word of Hart:

Christ is the Friend of sinners  
Be that forgotten never

and when Christ makes that known in some word, some invitation, some promise; when He shows the nature and the spirit and the freedom and the fullness of the gospel in that passage where He sends out His servants into the highways and hedges to compel all to come in whom they should meet, halt, maimed, blind, poor, and bring them, compel them to come in; then I say, such a gospel as that does dissipate the bondage, the fear, the legal working of the heart. Notice that in your own religion, if God, the Holy Spirit, gives you some sweet inkling of the freeness and the greatness of the gospel, overcoming and removing law and sin and every obstacle, and bringing near unto God in reconciliation all who were born again and who felt themselves to be enemies to God and goodness.

And the next thing to mention in liberty is that to which some of us have not attained perhaps, namely when the veil is quite taken away from the mind and the heart and it is turned to the Lord and the sinner finds that Christ is in him, that he is in Christ, and the law is dead for the time and guilt is removed and pollution washed away and the sinner gets a clear and full and powerful answer to his cry. He says, now I know that the Lord heareth and saveth His anointed. I cried unto Him and He heard me and He sent from above and delivered me. He took me out of many waters. "Because they put their trust in Him." And I will say this, you will never venture for one moment on God by an

act of faith and be disowned, be turned back, and go away unanswered; never.

In the pit of endless ruin  
Let it never Lord be said  
Here's a soul that perished suing  
For the boasted Saviour's aid

Pray on poor sinner, with all your fears, with all those blaspheming Hagarites about you, within you, with all the bondage that comes upon you at times, with all the legal workings that you have, pray on, and the day will come when you will say, now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed. Now I know that Christ is the Friend of sinners, and that He is my Friend, my Redeemer; when you will say: "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength".

Now you have been kind enough to bear with me and I can go on no longer, except to say I hope the Lord will bless this gracious gospel to you as He has blessed it to my own soul from time to time, and may He grant that we may be encouraged to go on praying in the face of all discouragements. Many of them will come against you, but pray on, and you will find, as I have said, an answer coming down from heaven.

AMEN.