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The Lord's Supper, pt 3

Joel Portman

Different opinions have always existed concerning who should take part at the Lord's Supper, where it should be celebrated, how often we should carry it out, and what form should characterize it. One doubts that these differences will ever be resolved, given the different attitudes toward what the Lord's Supper is, what is its intention, and who it was given for. So we must turn to God's Word to determine what should mark our practice of this important occasion and how local assemblies should express obedience to the Lord in this ordinance.

Participants at the Supper

The institution of the Lord's Supper followed the end of the Passover celebration. When the Passover had ended (but very closely following it), Christ instituted a new remembrance. While the Passover was a remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the disciples were now to remember a greater work that He was about to accomplish, to deliver those who trust Him from the bondage of their sins and the resultant condemnation. What He did had not been done before, when Jesus took bread, then the cup, and told them to all partake of it in remembrance of Him. It would seem clear (at least to this writer), that Judas went out after receiving the sop (John 13:27-30). Paul says in 1 Cor. 11:23 that it was the same night while Jesus was (being) betrayed (while Judas was carrying out his deed of betrayal), the Lord Jesus took bread and instituted the supper. Among the early believers in Acts, the only participants in "(the) breaking of bread" were those who had gladly received his (Peter's) word, had been baptized, and had been added to that fellowship.

This is not the fellowship of life in the body of Christ; it was the fellowship of that new company of saints in Jerusalem. The breaking of bread follows the phrase that they "continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine (teaching), and in (the) fellowship." So that these who expressed their united fellowship as that primitive assembly were those who were already marked by these characteristics, and the breaking of bread was an expression of that fellowship that had been established. Paul, in 1 Cor. 10:16-17, emphasizes the same truth. The partaking of the cup and the bread is an expression of the fellowship that those share, and the one cup and the one loaf is an expression of their common basis of fellowship. Some would enlarge that expression to include all who are in the body of Christ, and in one sense that is true; however, those who were participating in that setting seem to be the focus of Paul's statement.

So we believe that both the teaching and the pattern of the early church establishes the truth that the Lord's Supper is an act of believers in a local assembly that expresses their mutual appreciation for the Lord Jesus and His work for them, and that it also displays the common fellowship that they enjoy in that assembly. We have no record of anyone partaking at the Lord's Supper who was not part of a local fellowship. Even if one came from another assembly with a letter to commend them, they would be received into that assembly and could participate in the privilege of the Lord's Supper that is connected with that fellowship, even if they were only being received for a day.

We believe that is a grave error of interpretation to try to apply the present religious practices of Christendom, with all its confusion and departure, to the simple teaching and example of the New Testament. Many attempt to do so, and they must twist and distort the plain record of the practices that prevailed in New Testament times. It is obvious, that in the Acts, there were no unbaptized believers, neither were there any believers (who were not under assembly discipline) who were not part

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of a local testimony. We DO NOT receive visitors to the Lord's Supper, since this is not taught in the Scripture. (1 Cor. 11:28, "let a man examine himself," does not apply in this case. This verse refers to believers already IN fellowship in that assembly). We receive any professing believer to the fellowship of the assembly, and having been received, they are welcome to participate in the remembrance that recognizes that fellowship in Christ.

If one were to be received to remember the Lord on the basis of their claiming to be a believer, the only assurance of whether they are real or not would be their own word. But without knowing that person, how would the elders know? Then again, their coming should be with a letter to commend them, but if they are not in a local assembly already, where would that letter originate from? Who would write it? So that we see that only those who are already received into a local assembly fellowship are truly qualified to enjoy the privilege of remembering the Lord in this way.

We have already established that the Lord's Supper is not a function of the body of Christ but of the local assembly. Only such a gathering of known believers can fulfill that requisites for a coming together to break bread, as we see in God's Word.

Place of the Supper

That now brings us to another point, and that is that the Lord's Supper is not to be carried out in any locale other than a local assembly. The practice of carrying the bread and some wine to a person in their house is not found in our Bible. The practice of some deciding to remember the Lord while they are traveling or while in some motel room on a vacation is not in our Bible. The idea that an individual can sit in their home, possibly with some others having a Bible study or some other gathering, and Scripturally celebrate the Lord's Supper is not found. We can understand the desire of believers in such circumstances, but that doesn't alter the truth of God's Word, and it is our only guide.

No, the Lord's Supper, as we have been trying to emphasize, is a privilege that is a part of and an expression of the fellowship of those saints who are obeying the Lord in this manner, and it is always linked with an established

testimony of believers in an assembly. Christians today often seem to be satisfied to be saved, without realizing that the Word of God commands them to be baptized and that it is God's will for them to be joined to a local assembly fellowship. Else, how can they obey the Lord to remember Him, since to do so is expressed in the form of a command, not an option (1 Cor. 11:24-25 are in the imperative).

According to the inspired record, Paul never partook of the Lord's Supper when he was on one of his frequent journeys, unless he was at an assembly, such as at Troas in Acts 20. Why should we do any differently? We learn what is to characterize us in our testimony for the Lord by the precepts that have been taught as well as from the pattern that was followed. Early church history shows us that this simplicity of obedience to divine truth was quickly abandoned and other practices were instituted, but this doesn't make it right. May the Lord, by His Spirit, help us to do what is right in His sight!

The time of day of the Lord's Supper is not told us apart from the practice of the early disciples to meet in the evening, such as in Acts 20 at Troas, but the day is clearly defined. It is the first day of the week when the disciples were met together, and that is the Lord's Day to us. A number of actions are linked with the first day of the week. It was the day when Christ rose from the dead, it was the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the Spirit descended and formed the body of Christ. It was when the believer in Troas gathered as an assembly in Acts 20:7 and when the believers in Corinth were to set aside funds for a donation to the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:2). It was on the Lord's Day, when John was on Patmos, that the Lord appeared to him (Rev. 1:10). So it is appropriate and according to God's Word that we set that day aside to be devoted to Him. The Sabbath was ordained by God as a day of rest for Israel, but it's not so for us on the Lord's Day. We may make it so, but it is a day set apart for the Lord and the special service to honor Him and to gather with the Lord's people.

Duration of the Lord's Supper

We constantly remind ourselves, don't we, that this is only "until He come". This is what the

Lord said in the upper room to His disciples when He instituted this remembrance, and surely after He returns to take His church away unto Himself, there will be no need for any event such as this to remember Him by. We will see Him! But we also need to remember, that each time may be the last in view of the imminence of His coming. Do we think of it that way? Do we only carelessly go through the "motions" of what we have always done, not remembering that each occasion when we gather for this purpose, it should be special, with our spiritual exercise exerted to remember Him with reverence, with deepest appreciation and wonder, seeking to be prepared to do so when we actually sit down in fellowship with one another and with His promised presence in our midst. It is a dishonor to His Name when it is otherwise. Each Lord's Supper is not simply "another time to do so", but a precious opportunity to be received with the recognition that it may be my last opportunity to do so. He is worthy of far more than we can possibly render to Him, and evidently worthy of far more than we actually give Him. May we give Him the very best, holding nothing back for ourselves, so that His Name will be magnified in our midst.

Costly Discipleship

A. W. Tozer

In our eagerness to make converts I am afraid we have lately been guilty of using the technique of modern salesmanship, which is of course to present only the desirable qualities in a product and ignore the rest. We go to men and offer them a cozy home on the sunny side of the brae. If they will but accept Christ He will give them peace of mind, solve their problems, prosper their business, protect their families and keep them happy all day long. They believe us and come, and the first cold wind sends them shivering to some counselor to find out what has gone wrong; and that is the last we hear of many of them. The teachings of Christ reveal Him to be a realist in the finest meaning of that word. Nowhere in the Gospels do we find anything visionary or overoptimistic. He told His hearers the whole truth and let them make up their minds.

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might grieve over the retreating form of an inquirer who could not face up to the truth, but He never ran after him to try to win him with rosy promises. He would have men follow Him, knowing the cost, or He would let them go their ways. All this is but to say that Christ is honest. We can trust Him. He knows that He will never be popular among the sons of Adam and He knows that His followers need not expect to be. The wind that blows in His face will be felt by all who travel with Him, and we are not intellectually honest when we try to hide that fact from them.

The Courage to Act

Jim Beattie

When I was saved in my mid-teens sixty years ago, the assemblies went through serious crises when principles were being set aside and the call for changes (for modernization) that had begun in earlier times had ripened into full bloom. Those days passed, but we have come full circle. As we were then, once more we are in crisis days in assembly life. It is a well-known saying that "those who forget their history are doomed to repeat it." *And we are repeating it!* I watched the devastation that gradually followed in the wake of those changes. And I see it coming again. Ultimately, we will reap the same harvest if continue to plant the same seeds of departure.

Under of the banner of being relevant and making the lost comfortable among us, we are adopting the world's methods of communicating truth: methods that did not work then. And they will not work now.

Many years ago, I read an insightful book on evangelism. In it the writer noted that the beautiful fragrant red rose teaches a lesson by the thorns on its stem. For its own protection, it must repel as well as attract. He went on to state that, in our eagerness to win souls, we must never forget that sometimes "by our additions we subtract, and by our multiplying we divide." There is no virtue in small numbers, but how we increase our numbers is as

important as the increase itself – and perhaps even more important. In some places it appears that some are so bent on attracting that they have no interest in the safety of repelling.

There are times when we must recognize the wrong and have the courage to say "No!" When King Ahab wanted to make a trade or pay for Naboth's vineyard, Naboth's response was: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee" (1 Kings 21:3). That statement was his death sentence. Did Naboth know that this was a possibility? If he had any understanding of Jezebel, he knew it would not go well. But God's inheritance was his only concern. Nothing else mattered.

There were also "Naboths" sixty years ago. My father was one of them. A number of those who had the courage to say "No" to unscriptural changes were considered reactionary and nitpicking. Some were, of course. But not all resistance to change is driven by stubbornness and intransigence. Finding the balance between what the Word of God would encourage or allow and what is departure from divine principles demands insight and careful thought. But once it is clear that Scriptures are being set aside, there is no room for timidity and indifference. And while most of us do not like confrontation, there are times when there is no alternative.

The most courageous soldier in the battle is not the professional fighter who loves the conflict, but the soldier who trembles in the battle but loves his country. The latter is not motivated by the thrill of engagement but by loyalty to principle. Determination not to surrender takes courage that rises above the cowering fear that would make a person retreat.

Like our days, the days of Samuel were times of crisis. At that time "...there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Opposition to obedience to the Lord was rampant. The Bethlehem-Judah trilogy of Judges 17, Judges 19, and the book of Ruth shows how deep and tragic the departure was. Three men departed from Bethlehem-Judah. The one in chapter 17 became a false priest to do the work of the devil; the one in chapter 19, initiated a horrific work of the flesh; and Elimelech in Ruth chapter 1 left Bethlehem-Judah for the world of his own

choosing.

Additionally, 1st Samuel opens with two men who lacked courage in a day when it was needed most: Elkanah lacked courage in his private life and Eli in the public arena.

Elkanah was a pacifist. His wife, Hannah, was heartbroken, but his view was that he was enough. Instead of "nourishing and cherishing his wife" (Ephesians 5:29), he considered he was even "better" to her "than ten sons" (ch. 1:29)!

Eli realized the wickedness of his sons and rebuked them (ch. 2:22-25). But it required more than a rebuke; it required the death penalty. And since Eli wouldn't carry it out, the Lord did it Himself.

Eli had been warned by "a man of God" who asked in the Lord's name: "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honor-est thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people" (1 Samuel 2:29)?

It took a woman who was "...in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore" (1 Samuel 1:10) to bring a solution to the problem through a child who was willing to hear what God had to say. Samuel listened: "And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:10).

In the woman Hannah and in the child Samuel, we discover the most important lesson for these crisis days: that "...God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

In the past, many of God's servants felt their own inadequacy. Moses protested: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus. 3:11)? Gideon questioned: "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house" (Judges 6:15). Jeremiah said "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child" (Jeremiah 1:6).

Perhaps our greatest need is to feel our own inability so we can recognize that "...when

I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). And the Lord can assure us that "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

I have never seen a time in my sixty years in assembly life when courage is needed more than in the present. It is not the time to feel our weakness, but to lean on God's mighty arm. And do the courageous thing: refuse to let things slide further.

In 1901, Maltbie D. Babcock wrote in *Thoughts for Every Day Living*:

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.

Be strong!

Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O
shame!

Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's
name.

Be strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the
wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long;
Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow comes the
song.

The world cannot bury Christ. The earth is not deep enough for His tomb; the clouds are not wide enough for His winding sheet. He ascends into the heavens, but the heavens cannot contain Him. He still lives in the church unconsumed with His love; in the truth that reflects His image; in the hearts which burn as he talks to them by the way.

The Royal Genealogy

Matthew 1:1 – 6, 16 – 17

Larry Steers

Genealogies are likely the least read passages of scripture. Many of the names are

difficult to pronounce, and the reading to many likely seems dull. How easy it is to skip them and read on, but, they are a vital part of the Divinely inspired Word of God. Often, embedded in them are precious truths. The Gospel the Holy Spirit has given us through the pen of Matthew is steeped with Old Testament references. The portion of the genealogy referenced above is an indication of this.

One great purpose of the Holy Spirit in recording this genealogy in the Gospel of Matthew, which presents the Lord as "The King", is to give the essential qualifications of the one who will occupy the throne of David.

First, He must be virgin born (v 23). The angel Gabriel revealed to Mary, "a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph" (Luke 1:27). Espoused but not wed, a virgin, that "thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). To this Son "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). Mary was astounded and expressed this to the angel, "How shall this be seeing I know not a man? (Luke 1:34). But Gabriel's words would be fulfilled by a mighty work of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35).

Second, the King must be "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). The Apostle Paul reminds us as well, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

Third, He must have royal credentials. Mary was of the tribe of Judah. Her genealogy is recorded by Luke and runs from David through Nathan. However, Matthew gives the essential royal genealogy passing through David and his son Solomon. As indicated above, Joseph was not the biological father, however, he had legal responsibility for the child. Because of Joseph's ancestry, the credentials to ascend David's throne run through Joseph. There is one living man with a fully legitimate claim and right to the throne of David, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. Every word of Gabriel to Mary has been or will be perfectly fulfilled. We will add further details latter.

This vital genealogy of the King of all Kings is presented by Matthew in three series of fourteen generations (Matt. 1:17).

First, Abraham to David (verses 2 to 6).

Second, from David to Jechonias (verses 6 to 11).

Third, from Jechonias to Joseph (verses 12 to 16).

Observe that the third series began during the captivity in Babylon in the Old Testament history of Israel, but continues in the New Testament with Joseph "the husband of Mary" (verse 16).

Satan has made a mighty and determined effort to break this genealogy by violently and ruthlessly assaulting it, and by seeking to introduce moral corruption. Thus, if successful, to destroy the Lord's rightful claim to kingship. While a careful study will reveal a number of instances of these diabolical attempts to disqualify our Lord, this article will draw attention to two of Satan's schemes and their total failure. First, Satan attempted to wipe out the seed royal, and second, perhaps a more sinister attempt to corrupt the royal line.

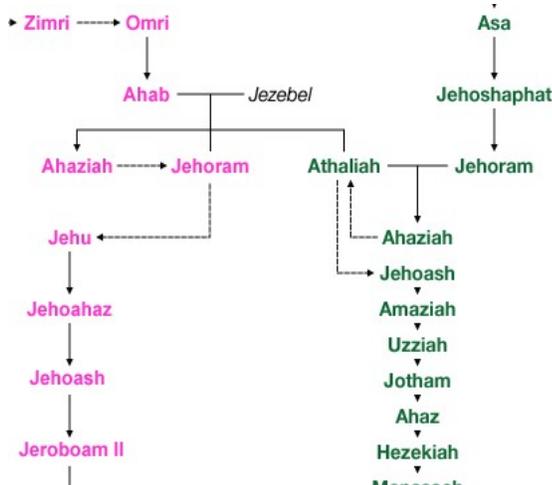
Note the second series of fourteen generations (versus 6 to 11), and take very special notice of verse 8. There are two women in this verse who are unnamed here but clearly identified in the Old Testament. One was Athaliah, an evil, corrupt, sinister woman. The other was Jehosheba, a moral, upright, honourable, brave woman. Read further and you will meet these two.

Also, in this second series there are three Kings of Judah omitted. Interesting to notice further that all three are immediate descendants of Athaliah. Between Joram (Jehoram, 2 Kings 8:16) and Ozias, both in verse 8, the three Kings omitted are Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah (2 Kings 8 to 14 and 2 Chron. 21 to 25).

We are still in verse 8. Putting the references relative to the two women referred to above with the contents of verse 8 we note: Jehosaphat was the great great grandson of Solomon. He was succeeded by his son Jehoram (2 Kings 8:16). Jehoram married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, King of Israel. Her mother was likely Jezebel (2 Kings 8:18). These sinister events were propagated by Satan as he marshals his evil scheme against the King's genealogy.

Under Satanic power Jehoram, no doubt to cement his reign, reduces the seed royal by murdering his brethren, the princes of Israel. Ahaziah, the youngest son of Jehoram, King of Judah reigned for one year (2 Kings 8:26). The eldest sons had been slain by the Arabians (2Chron. 22:1) while others had been slain by Jehu (2 Chron.22:8), further reducing the royal genealogy.

Before going further, below is an attempt at a family tree to show the relationship of the individuals encompassed in verse 8 of Matthew's genealogy.



Ahaziah (King of Judah) was greatly influenced by his grandfather, Ahab King of Israel and his mother Athaliah, an evil, wicked woman who desired the throne of Judah which was occupied by her son. Upon the death of Ahaziah, Athaliah slew all of the royal seed (2 Kings 11:1) and would also have killed her own grandson Joash.

Under the violent diabolical enmity and hatred of Satan the royal line was reduced by Jehoram who killed the royal princes. The Satanically inspired Arabians further decimated the line, by Jehu, and now by Athaliah (2 Kings 11:1). This woman reduced the genealogy of Christ to one living male, Joash. She would have murdered her own grandson Joash (son of Ahaziah). Joash, an infant only one year old, was the only legitimate claimant to the throne.

Out of a totally dysfunctional, ruthless family arises a compassionate Jehosheba (2 Kings 11:3), the daughter of King Jehoram and

the sister of Ahaziah and the aunt of Joash. She was the wife of Jehoida, the priest (2 Chron. 22:11). Jehosheba rescued and hid the infant Joash for six years (2 Kings 11:3) in a bed-chamber in the House of the Lord. She little comprehended the enormity of the rescue. Defying Athaliah, one brave, great woman preserved the royal line from the evil intent of Satan to break it. Following reference is made to the five women in the genealogy of our Lord. While Jehosheba is not directly in the line of Christ, she certainly merits honorable mention.

Under the leadership of Jehoida, the young Joash is presented as the legitimate heir to the throne, and Athaliah perishes.

Further, the exercise here is to notice the five women our attention is drawn to by the Holy Spirit in Matthew 1, and Satan's attempt to corrupt the genealogy. Four women are specifically named and the fifth is clearly identified (Bathsheba). Human reasoning may have excluded three who had a moral dark mark against them (Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba). The Jew would have omitted the two Gentiles (Ruth the Moabitess and Rahab the Cananite).

1. Tamar (v. 3) The Sovereignty of God

The sordid scene of Gen. 28 places a very dark mark against Jacob's son Judah. After being implicated solemnly in the sale of Joseph (Gen. 37), Judah continues a downward path of departure by an unequal yoke with Shuah, a Canaanite. The union produces three sons. The first born, Er, is given by Judah to Tamar as her husband. Because of his refusal to fulfill his responsibilities as a husband, he is judged by God and slain. Onan, the second son, is commanded by Judah to wed Tamar. Because of Onan's wilful refusal to embrace the responsibilities of a husband he also is slain by God. Shelah, the third son is promised to Tamar but is withheld.

Satan no doubt is moving behind the scene seeking to discredit Tamar. While there is much Satan does not know, he is certainly aware the Messiah must come from the tribe of Judah.

Tamar covers her face and appears as a harlot. Judah goes to her not knowing her identity. She demands a pledge, Judah's signet, bracelet and staff. When Judah discovers

that Tamar is with child he becomes righteous not knowing that he is the father of the child. He demands that Tamar be burned. But Tamar produces the pledge.

Is there not truth for us to learn here?

First, the confession and restoration of Judah when he confesses, "She has been more righteous than I" (v. 26).

But second, the first woman Tamar in Matthew chapter one had two sons by her father-in-law, Pharez and Zoram, (v. 5), hence Judah is both father and grandfather to the two boys. While the circumstances are distasteful, God is sovereign and His purposes will not be frustrated. Zoram and Tamar are mentioned in the genealogy, while Judah and Pharez are in the Royal line.

2. Rahab (v. 5) The Power of God

The mighty power of God is manifest in the conquest of Jericho, but also in the deliverance of Rahab.

Rahab, a Gentile Canaanite, was the morally unclean harlot of Jericho. Long before the city was surrounded and the scarlet line placed by Rahab over the wall, she had heard and believed a report. She said to the spies, "I know that the Lord has given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us" (Josh. 2:9). She heard of the deliverance of Israel, how they passed through the sea and defeated the two kings of the Amorites (Josh. 2:10). Note the confession of this woman: "The Lord your God He is God in Heaven above and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:11) again, long before she put the scarlet line over the wall. James reminds us that she was "justified by works when she had received the messengers and sent them out another way" (James 2:25) thus proving her faith.

When the King of Jericho heard that the spies had entered the city, he sent men to the house of Rahab immediately. Why Rahab's house? Could it be suggested that her faith in God had changed her life? She was no longer a harlot and no longer an idol worshipper.

The same mighty power of God is essential and evident today in delivering a sinner as is seen in the experience of Rahab.

Her marriage is not recorded in the Old Testament. It has been suggested that Salmon

(Matt. 1:4,5, Luke 3:32) was one of the spies and evidently became the husband of Rahab. From that union was a son Boaz born, an outstanding type of the Kinsman Redeemer in the book of Ruth. Rahab became the great grandmother of David.

3. Ruth (v. 5) Triumph of the Grace of God

Ruth was a Gentile, to Israel unclean. She was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4) with an unsavoury origin. Lot's oldest daughter had a son, her father Lot being the father of the son. The infant was named Moab (Gen.19:30 - 37). The Moabites were detested by Israel and were barred by the law, "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever" (Deut. 23:3).

Naomi and her husband had abandoned Bethlehem Judah for the land of Moab (Ruth 1:2). Their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion married Ruth and Orpah, Moabitish women. Ruth is widowed by the death of her husband, but is impressed by all that she has heard about Israel's God. She eventually leaves Moab with Naomi, a bitter woman. When encouraged by Naomi to return to Moab, Ruth, whose heart God has touched, gives one of the most beautiful confessions of faith in the scriptures when she says, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will do: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

In contrast to Rahab, Tamar and Bathsheba, Ruth stands morally pure. Boaz gives beautiful testimony to the outstanding character of Ruth, "It hath been shewed me all that thou hast done with thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband :and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and are come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore" (Ruth 2:11).

Ruth is content to glean in the field of Boaz and eventually becomes his wife. Had objection been expressed to Boaz about taking a Moabitish woman as his wife, he could well have responded "my mother was a Canaanite". It does appear in Matthews' genealogy that

Ruth is the tenth generation from Abraham.

The grace of God brings Ruth out of Moab and places her in the Royal genealogy as the great grandmother David.

4. The Wife of Uriah (Bathsheba) - The Forgiveness of God

How wondrous are the mighty workings of our God! While the armies of Israel went forth to battle, David tarried still at Jerusalem (2 Sam. 11:1). He succumbed to the lust of the eyes (2 Sam. 11:2). How full of practical lessons this is. Bathsheba, the wife of another man should have found a private place to bathe. We live in a day when the display of the body is becoming more and more open. Spiritual modesty demands carefulness. But David should have been more careful and guarded what his eyes were occupied with.

David committed the sin of adultery (2 Sam. 11:4). That verse 4 says, "she came in to him", strongly suggests she was not forced to come.

As the following details unfold, David had his faithful servant Uriah placed deliberately in the most dangerous area of the battle and killed.

The King of Israel broke three of the commandments:

1. Ex. 20:17 "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

2. Ex. 20:14 "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

3. Ex. 20:13 "Thou shalt not kill."

Both David and Bathsheba experienced the heavy chastening hand of God. The conceived infant died. Perhaps Psalm 51 reflects David's cry when the weight of his sin fell upon him. Psalm 51:1 "have mercy upon me, O God", "Blot out my transgressions", v. 2 "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." V. 3 "my sin is ever before me" and the most solemn confession, v. 4, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned".

God forgives real, heartfelt, contrite confession. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Notice that God forgives "all unrighteousness". As in David's sin, so today, there is a way back to God from the dark paths of sin.

To David and Bathsheba was born a

second son Solomon.

5. Mary v. 16 - The Choice of God

The evil teaching of the immaculate conception, that Mary was conceived without sin, is sinister and wrong. Also, to suggest that she is the mother of God is terrible error.

Mary was born in sin like the whole of the human race without exception. She lived in the despised village of Nazareth. Nathanael gave expression to this estimate of Nazareth with the words, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). As already indicated, she was espoused, but not married to Joseph. Her life was holy, she was a virgin. Of all the women in Israel, she was God's chosen vessel to bring the Creator into the realm of His creation.

It must have been a startling moment to her when she was visited by an angel from Heaven, Gabriel. His momentous message to her was that she would conceive and give birth to a son who was to be called Jesus (Luke 1:31). Surely we can understand that she would be greatly troubled, agitated, disturbed. Further, Gabriel revealed to her that "He shall be great," and would sit upon the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). While earthly monarchs rise and fall, this Son would reign forever. There would be no geographical borders to His Kingdom. This Son would be the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. A submissive young woman responded, "be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

Years later she stands at the cross with her eyes upon Him. She might have wondered at the words of the angel at that moment. No sceptre, they gave Him a reed. No royal garments, but an old robe. No vast kingdom to rule over, no subjects, for His own forsook Him, and the mob slandered Him. The sword has pierced her own soul (Luke 2:35). But, we must conclude that after His resurrection when she met with a few disciples she understood.

We worship that "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). Our God allowed Satan to go so far and no further. The Royal Genealogy of the King of all Kings has been perfectly preserved, giving Him the sole claim and perfect right to the Throne of David and universal rule.