

“The SECRET” [to *mustērion*]

Studies in the later epistles of the apostle Paul

(No. 4 Continued from page 56)

CHAPTER 3

“The LORD said unto my Lord, “*Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*”.

The LORD shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth.

The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a *priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*.

The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.

He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries.

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head”.

(Psalm 110; KJV)

“He shall...bear His glory and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a *Priest upon His throne...*”

(Zechariah 6:13)

“*Priest upon His throne*” and “*Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*”; what does that mean? What is the significance of this in the Scriptures and Almighty God’s unfolding plan?

We aim to “search” and seek to answer these questions, as the Lord may permit it.

We are left in no doubt about the strong significance Almighty God attaches to a “Priest after the order of Melchizedek”, because regarding this “**The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent**”.

[*shaba*: “to swear, adjure”; properly to be complete, but used only as a denominative from the word meaning “seven”, i.e.; “to seven oneself”, that is, swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times) (*Strong*) – inasmuch, as *Gesenius* notes, “that the septenary number was sacred and oaths were confirmed either by seven sacrifices (Genesis. 21:28) or seven witnesses or pledges”].

The Scriptural understanding of “swearing an oath” is based on:

“If a man... swears an oath to bind [*acar*] his soul with a bond [*ecar*] * ; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (Numbers 30:2, KJV);

* [*ecar* : “bond, binding obligation” (*Strong*) from the root word *acar* : “to tie, bind, imprison”, which – according to *Gesenius* – also means: “to make captive, to hold in (or as in) a prison (even if not [physically] bound”].

The one swearing an oath was therefore *bound with his soul* [i.e. his whole being] to the entity invoked by the oath.

We see this in e.g. 1 Samuel 20, when David and Jonathan enter into a solemn covenant with each other, when they “went out both of them into the field” and there addressed God, promising and swearing *before the Lord*, and thus said Jonathan:

“And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever”.

Subsequently “the king [namely the now victorious king David] now spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD'S oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul”. (2 Samuel 21:7, KJV).

Thus – as Paul says – “...*men verily swear by the greater...*” (Hebrews 6:16).

Hence our Lord *warned* – for the deep reasons He gave - against oaths:

- “But I say unto you, Swear not at all;
 - neither by Heaven FOR it is God's throne:
 - Nor by the earth FOR it is His footstool:
 - neither by Jerusalem FOR it is the city of the great King” (Matthew 5:34-35, KJV).

- “And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth BY the throne of God, and BY Him That sitteth thereon”. (Matthew 23:22, KJV).

The *reason* for this warning, is that through swearing by anything, in particular if swearing by things pertaining to Almighty God, *man* – having bound his soul with such an oath – would of course (being man) nearly invariably *break* his oath, and thereby and catastrophically fall into condemnation:

“But ABOVE ALL things, my brethren, swear NOT, *neither* by heaven, *neither* by the earth, *neither* by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; LEST ye fall into CONDEMNATION” (James 5:12, KJV).

The consequences are disastrous as can be seen in e.g. Ezekiel 17:

“Seeing *he* [the rebellious house of Israel] *despised the oath by breaking the covenant...he shall not escape...Therefore* thus saith the Lord GOD; As I live, surely *Mine oath that he hath despised, and My covenant that he hath broken*, even it will I recompense upon his own head....spread My net upon him...he shall be taken in My snare...I will bring him to Babylon...And all his fugitives...shall fall by the sword...they that remain shall be scattered toward all winds: and ye shall know that I the LORD have spoken it”.
(Ezekiel 17: 18-21, KJV)].

Now, when GOD swears an oath, none of the above applies, because HIS word clearly stands, oath or no oath.

Why does God then on several occasions swear an oath?

We can discern three different reasons:

(1) He condescends, for the sake of fallen *man*, to impress upon him the absoluteness of His promises (whether blessings or judgments) regarding a particular matter, in terms *man* can understand, FOR - as the apostle Paul says - when

“...God made promise to Abraham, **because** He could swear by **no greater, He swore by HIMSELF**”...

“...*men* verily swear by the greater...” (Hebrews 6:13, 16 KJV).

Hence God - on this second occurrence of God swearing an oath (for the first occurrence, see section 2 below) - said to Abraham:

“By Myself have I sworn [*shaba*] saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:

- That in blessing I will bless thee, and
- in multiplying I will multiply thy seed

as the stars of the heaven,
and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and

- thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice”.

(Genesis 22:16-18, KJV).

[And this oath, as also noted in *The Companion Bible*, is the foundation of Israel’s blessings (Genesis 24:7; 26:3; 50:24; Exodus 13:5,11; 33:1). David’s “sure mercies” are all grounded on it (Psalm 89:35; 132:11. Compare Luke 1:73)].

Hence e.g.

“But because the LORD loved you, **and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers**, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt”.
(Deuteronomy 7:8, KJV).

Another example is in Jeremiah 22, when the Lord speaks through the prophet Jeremiah “*to the house of the king of Judah*”:

“...Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong...
...But **IF** ye will not hear these words, **I swear by Myself, saith the LORD**, that this house shall become a desolation...make you...wilderness... cities...not inhabited... destroyers against thee...”.

In Exodus 17 we find the only reference in Scripture to God swearing to make war with a particular nation, namely the Amalekites.

To understand why, we excerpt from Appendix 4 in our Gethsemane book:

As recorded in the Book of Esther: in the Captivity, Satan used *his* servant Haman to try to destroy *all* the Jews.

When King Ahasuerus ruled the vast kingdom of Persia and Media (“India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces”, Esther 1:1), and banished his queen, Vashti, for disobedience, a decree went out to find a new bride for the king to marry.

As a result, Esther, a Jewess who lived in Shusan together with and had been brought up by her great-uncle Mordecai (when her father and mother died) – both being descendants of the Jews brought into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar – was among the beautiful maidens brought to the palace, as ordered by king Ahasuerus’ decree.

Mordecai was serving as one of members of the king’s household (1:5).

Esther did not disclose to anybody her origin or that she was Jewish, for Mordecai (who considered her like his own daughter) “*had charged her that she should not shew it*”.

[Almighty God is *already* here putting in place *His* servant to defeat Satan’s later unfolding purpose.

Esther appears not only to have been uncommonly beautiful, but also of such personality and sweet disposition that she readily captivated and found favour with the influential servants in the king’s household (“Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her” (2:15; cfr. 2:9])

When Esther was presented to the king,

“the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and **made her queen** instead of Vashti” (2:17).

Even then, Esther did not disclose her Jewish origin, because

“Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him” (2:20).

And then matters begin to unfold.

[We will only briefly highlight a couple of matters, inviting the reader to read the whole account in Scripture, and enjoy the details of *how* Almighty God works, in the fascinating Book of Esther).

1.

“In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wrath, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther **certified** the king thereof **in Mordecai's name**.

And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was **written in the book of the chronicles before the king**”.

[So: this assassination plot was put on the records, evidencing that Mordecai was the one who uncovered it].

2.

Haman is promoted to Head of the king's household – all bowing to and reverencing him, *except* the Jew Mordecai.

3.

Haman, “*the Jews' Enemy*” (3:10), misleads the king and obtains his ring to issue a formal decree, sealed with the king's ring, within all of Persia and Media, to kill *all* Jews – men, women, children - at a particular time, and being rewarded by the spoiling of all their goods.

[The key to understanding Haman's hatred and actions is in his name: “Haman *the Agagite*”, i.e. Haman was an *Amelekite*, a descendant of King Agag of Amelek.

The Amelekites were the formally declared enemies of JEHOVAH *because*:

- When Israel came out of Egypt, “Then came Amalek and fought with Israel” (Exodus 17:8, i.e. attacked God's chosen People without cause and without warning, having even come a long way to deliberately do so);
- The Amelekite attack was carried out in the most nefarious and cowardly fashion:
“...all that do unrighteously are an *abomination* unto the LORD thy God. REMEMBER what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God” (Deuteronomy 25:16-18, KJV);

(i.e. the attack was from the rear, slaughtering all the *weaker* Israelites who were not keeping up with the main body: old, infirm, little ones, pregnant women etc.)

Hence God commanded:

- “And the LORD said unto Moses, “Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven”.
- And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it *Jehovah-nissi*: For he said: “*Because the LORD hath SWORN that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation*” (Exodus 17:14-16, KJV);
- “Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it”. (Deuteronomy 25:19, KJV)

Hence Mordecai, as a Jew, could never bow to a person designated by Jehovah Himself as an enemy.

However, we may also infer that Amalek, residing or roaming within the region where the Second angel-fall (*after* the Flood) took place, was one of the nations corrupted by descendants of fallen angels, i.e. the Nephilim. We may infer this because of the Lord’s command regarding their utter destruction, a command God only issued in respect of nations irretrievably corrupted by the abominable relations between daughters of men and fallen angels and their Nephilim descendants.

Haman, described as “*the Jews’ Enemy*” is the only person in Scripture being thus designated – from which we would gather that he was particularly selected and energized by the Enemy, for the specific purpose of destroying God’s Chosen People; Haman is one of the *types* foreshadowing Anti-Christ].

The Decree:

“...there was written according to **all that Haman had commanded** unto

- the king's lieutenants, and
- to the governors that were over every province, and
- to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and
- to every people after their language;

in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

And the letters were sent by posts **into all the king's provinc**

to **DESTROY**, to **KILL**, and to **CAUSE TO PERISH**,
ALL Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day,
even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar,
and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in **every** province was published unto **all** people, that they should be ready against that day” (3:12-14, KJV).

4.

Queen Esther is informed by Mordecai of the Decree and charged by him that *she* must intervene with the king and

“that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people” (4:8)

Esther answers that everybody knows:

“that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days” (4:11)

Mordecai answers, making two important points:

- “Think *not* with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, **then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place**; BUT thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed”:
- “and **Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?**” (4:14)

[Mordecai thereby showing his keen understanding of Almighty God, implying that may Esther not have been blessed by GOD with her current position for just such an event as this – and Mordecai was absolutely right in this!

Mordecai also evidences full faith and confidence in the Lord, that He will not permit the destruction of of His people: ”...then shall...deliverance arise to the Jews *from another place*”.

Undoubtedly Mordecai bases his confidence on all the many promises previously made by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Israel, and the many times God had delivered Israel in the past].

“THEN Esther bade them return Mordecai this answer,

“Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise;

and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish”.

[We leave it to the reader to see *how* Esther defeats Haman's evil purpose, and *how* she overcomes the then huge *legal* problem (as we also see in Daniel, chapter 6, regarding Daniel and King Darius the Mede) that in the empire of Persia and Medes, a law, *once sealed and proclaimed*, could neither be changed nor withdrawn – not even by the king himself - but was absolute.

And the reader will also see how elegantly God ensures that king Ahasuerus becomes aware – at the exact right moment – of Mordecai's great service to him in discovering the assassination plot.

Let us briefly note regarding the following text:

“And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it *Jehovah-nissi*: For he said: “*Because the LORD hath SWORN that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation*” (Exodus 17:14-16, KJV).

“The Lord has sworn” is not *shaba`*, but *yad*: ”hand” together with *kec*: “seat (of honour), throne”.

However, *Gesenius* (and others) consider this reading an erroneous transcription for *nec*: “a banner or standard”, as “the context and verse 15 immediately prior nearly demands” (*Gesenius*), since Moses named the altar *Jehovah-nissi*: “Jehovah [is] my banner”.

Several modern versions would translate as if *Amalek* lifted his hand against God's throne or banner.

But that is hardly right: many nations so lifted their hands against God, without being (literally) “wiped out” from under heaven, or God declaring war from generation to generation.

The better sense is that God, by placing HIS hand on either His throne, or upon His war-standard, thereby *pledges*, i.e. makes an oath or swears by His throne or standard (whether the correct reading is *kec* or *nec*) to make war against Amalek.

Hence several other versions agree with the KJV and translate the sense: “God hath sworn” (e.g. Webster, ASV, NASB, HNV, NKJV, KJ21, GNV, Geneva Bible (1587), Modern Language Bible).

Also confer that our Lord says (Matthew 5:34): “Swear not at all...by Heaven FOR it is God's throne...”.

Man may not swear by God's throne; however GOD may of course swear by His own throne].

(2) God uses the oath, swearing by Himself, to demonstrate – and not only to *man* - the absolute security and surety of some of HIS covenants, *including* the very first occurrence in the Scriptures where we are told that God swore by Himself:

And God spake unto **Noah, and to his sons with him**, saying,

And I, behold, I establish My covenant

- with **you**, and
- with **your seed after you**; And
- with **every living creature that is with you**, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, **to every beast of the earth**.

And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between **Me** and **you** and **every living creature** [living souls : *nephesh*] that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between **Me** and **the earth**.

And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

And I will remember My covenant, which is between **Me** and **you** and **every living creature of all flesh**; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between **God** and **every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth**.

And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between **Me** and **all flesh that is upon the earth**" (Genesis 9:8-17, KJV).

[The word "covenant" is mentioned seven times].

There is no mention *here* in Genesis 9 of God's oath, but the Holy Spirit ensures that we know this through His prophet Isaiah (chapter 54), when the Lord "*thy Redeemer*" speaks so tenderly to Israel as a "*forsaken woman*" and "*a wife of youth when thou wast refused*, saith thy God":

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee", saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me:

FOR AS I have sworn [*shaba`*] that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; **SO have I sworn** [*shaba`*] that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee". (Isaiah 54: 6-9, KJV).

In 1 Chronicles 16:16 and in Psalms 105:9 (which 1 Chronicles quotes) we have the phrase:

"..the covenant which He made with Abraham, and of **His oath** [*shēbuw`ah*: "oath"; noun from the verb *shaba`*] unto Isaac; And hath **confirmed the same** to Jacob..."

[which refers to Genesis 50:24, which shows that also to *Jacob* did God confirm His covenant with an oath: "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He **sware** [*shaba`*] to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob"].

Likewise as regards David in Psalms 89:

"I have made a **covenant** with My chosen, I have **sworn unto** David My servant..." (verse 3); "Once **have I sworn** by My Holiness that I will not lie-unto David" (verse 35).

(3) Finally, we find that on three very select occasions, Almighty God is *confirming - by a special oath* - something, which is of immense and far-reaching purpose and involves much more than just earth, and the audience of *man*, but takes in the Heavens and the Heavenly and angelic powers.

The first occasion on which God swears a special oath:

“I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me EVERY knee shall bow, EVERY tongue shall swear”.

(Isaiah 45:23, KJV).

The context here in Isaiah 45 verily includes references to

- “I, even My hands, have stretched out the Heavens and all their host have I commanded” (verse 12);
- “the LORD that created the Heavens” (verse 18);
- “I am God and there is none else” (verse 21).

But this notwithstanding, in the Old Testament text it is clear that mankind, earth, Israel and the nations are primarily in view, and thus Isaiah’s prophecy would no doubt be read and understood then.

HOWEVER: the Holy Spirit – through His apostle Paul in the letters to Romans and Philippians which both quote Isaiah 45 – reveals to us today (after the Lord Jesus Christ has been made manifest, and now ALL Scripture has been completed) the extraordinary fact that the much deeper and full meaning of Isaiah 45 includes the following:

Romans:

“...**WE** shall all stand before the judgment seat **of CHRIST** *.

FOR [*gar*: particle of affirmation/conclusion: “truly therefore, verily as the case stands”] it is written, “As I live”, saith the Lord, “**every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to GOD**”.

SO [*oun*: “then, therefore”: particle indicating something following another necessarily] **THEN** [*ara*: “therefore”; particle of drawing conclusion] **every one of us** shall give account of himself **to GOD**” (Romans 14:10-12, KJV).

* [KJV has " the Judgment Seat of CHRIST. However, many versions instead read “the Judgment Seat of GOD" (including e.g. ASV, ESV, Darby).

The reason for this is that all the critical texts have "God" as the correct word in the text, instead of "Christ" (as written in the older *Textus Receptus* – and, incidentally, maintained by Scrivener in his critical work on the *Textus Receptus*).

However: (1) textual critics are by no means infallible, and (2) they deal first and foremost with manuscript examinations and evidence - but not with context and Scripture understanding.

The arguments for maintaining the reading "Christ" are

1. Paul's argument is *about* Christ: "...stand before the judgment seat of [Christ] FOR it is written" ... every knee shall bow, etc."

In Philippians 2 (the only other place in the New Testament where we have this quote from Isaiah 45), it is at the Name of Jesus that "every knee shall bow, etc."

2. "Judgment seat" [*bema*] – whether God's or Christ's - occurs only twice in the NT, namely here in Romans 14:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:10.

In 2 Corinthians, the original text is (as fully agreed by all): "*tou bēmatos tou Christou*"; In Romans 14:10 – as said - the *Textus Receptus* also has "*to bēmati tou Christou*", whilst the critical texts change that text to "*to bēmati tou Theou*".

3. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed ALL judgment unto the Son":

"...And hath given HIM [the Son] authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me. (John 5:22, 27-30).

There is no doubt, therefore, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the judge of ALL; therefore also Romans 14:10 refers to "the judgment seat of CHRIST".

Likewise all the older versions: (Wycliffe (1395); Tyndale (1525); Coverdale (1535); Bishops Bible (1568); Geneva Bible (1587); KJV (1611); Mace (1729); Wesley (1755), as well as Vulgata (405) and the Luther Bibel (1545).

According herewith also: Webster, Knox, KJ21, NKJV, Douay-Rheims and – amongst the literal translations: Young, Green, Julia Smith, exeGeses Companion Bible, Analytical Literal Translation og Emphatic Diaglott NT].

Romans therefore indicates

- that Isaiah 45 is to be understood to include *all* saved, all the ends of the earth, who "look unto ME", as "a just God and Saviour" (Isaiah 45: 21,22), because "we shall ALL stand before the judgment seat of Christ";

- that Isaiah 45 is to be understood to refer to our Lord and GOD Jesus Christ, because the “*ME*” in Isaiah 45:23 is GOD, Who is also defined as:

the “*I am God and there is no one else*” (v.22);
 the “*just God and Saviour*” (v.21);
 the “*I the LORD*” (v. 19, 21);
 the “*LORD that created the Heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it*” (v. 18);
 the “*O God of Israel, the Saviour*” (v. 17);
 the “*LORD of Hosts*” (v. 15).

THIS is the “ME” in Isaiah 45:23 Who says:

“**unto ME every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear**”.

AND in Romans 14 we clearly see that it is Isaiah 45:23, which is quoted by Paul as *authority for* and *the reason for* stating unequivocally, that every one of us shall give account of himself to *God*.

HOW and WHY, then, shall we give such an account?

BECAUSE: “...**WE** shall all stand before the judgment seat **of CHRIST**”.

As a child can understand: it is before the Lord JESUS CHRIST

- that “*every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear*”, and
- that that every one of us shall give account of himself, and
- that we stand at the judgment seat;

In Romans 14 our Lord Jesus Christ *IS* the “ME” in Isaiah 45. He *IS* GOD.

That THIS is the true understanding is further confirmed and magnificently expanded by the Holy Spirit in Philippians:

“Wherefore God also hath **highly exalted** [*huperupsoō*] Him, and **given** [*charizomai*] Him a Name which is **above** [*huper*] every name

THAT [*hina*: “in order that”] at the Name of Jesus **EVERY knee should bow**,
 of [things] in heaven [*epouranios*],
 and [things] in earth [*epigeios*],
 and [things] under the earth [*katachthonios*]

And [that] **EVERY tongue should confess** [*exomologeō*] **THAT** [*hoti*] Jesus Christ [is] **LORD**, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2: 9-11, KJV).

We come later in our studies to this magnificent text – and the even more magnificent context - in more detail.

For now we would simply wish to enable the reader to see the more literal sense in the Greek.

We have therefore – above - also left the square brackets in place, so it can be seen where the KJV translators added words for the purpose of the English.

[*huperupsoō*: “to exalt to the highest rank and power, raise to supreme majesty” – *Thayer*; the word is from *huper*, "over" (cfr. English “hyper”) with *hupsoō*: “to lift up on high, to exalt” (from *hupsos*: “height”, used of measurement, or of place, heaven, or rank, high station); this is the only occurrence in the New Testament

charizomai: “to show favor, grant, bestow, ", or “graciously confer”, or “to bestow a favor unconditionally”, (*Vine*); from *charis*: “grace” (cfr. English “charity”);

epouranios: “existing in or above heaven” from *epi* and *ouranos* (“heaven”) – *Thayer*; its first occurrence is in Matthew 18:35: “My heavenly Father”.

The literal sense is not “things” (as the KJV has it) but “beings”, i.e. *those* in the Heavenlies, or the Heavenly realms.

Thus *Thayer*, citing this passage, has the word referring to “the heavenly beings, the inhabitants of Heaven”, in “opposition to the *epigeios* and the *katachthonios*” (see below). Thus e.g. Darby: “heavenly beings”; Rotherham: “beings in Heaven”; HNV: “those in heaven”;

epigeios: from *epi* with *gē* (“earth”): those “existing upon the earth, earthly, terrestrial” (*Thayer*).

First occurrence is John 3:12: “If I have told you earthly [*epigeios*] things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly [2nd occurrence of *epouranios*] things?”;

katachthonios: those "under the earth, subterranean" (*kata*, "down," *chthon*, "the ground," from a root signifying that which is deep) – *Vine*. This is the only occurrence in the New Testament;

exomologeō: from *ek* "out" as an intensive, and *homologeō* (literally “to speak the same thing”: *homos*, "same," *lego* "to speak"): "to assent, accord, agree with”; Hence: "to confess or profess forth". It is the same word as used in Romans 14].

Hence we may express the sense of this text as follows (including Rotherham’s emphasis):

“Wherefore **God** also hath highly exalted [*huperupsoō*] Him and bestowed [*charizomai*] upon Him the Name, the which [double definite article] is above [*huper*] every [*pas*: without the article: all without exception] name,

in order that [*hina*] **in** [*en*] **the Name of Jesus** every [*pas*: all without exception] knee should bow,
- beings in heaven [*epouranios*] and in earth [*epigeios*], and under the earth [*katachthonios*] -

and that **every** [*pas*: all without exception] **tongue** [of these beings] shall [absolutely] profess [*exomologeō*] that [*hoti*] Jesus Christ is **LORD**, unto the GLORY of God the Father”.

Therefore: the Holy Spirit now allows *us today* to understand (which those who read Isaiah 45 then – when it was written – would not understand) that it is all of *KOSMOS* which is encompassed by the words: “EVERY knee” and “EVERY tongue”, namely absolutely everyone, *each and all created beings*, whether celestial, terrestrial or subterranean, whether of flesh, or of spirit, whether “living souls” or “living spirits”.

ALL shall bow before our Lord and God Jesus Christ.

ALL shall profess that “*Jesus Christ is LORD*”.

And: this is “unto the Glory of God the Father”.

[We will, as said, later revert to the breathtaking truths in Philippians 2; the above text is part of an even larger, deeper and magnificent context also pertaining to The Secret, which is the main subject of these studies].

The second occasion on which God swears a special oath:

The *second* occasion is recorded in Acts 2:30, where the apostle Peter refers to king David’s prophecy some 1000 years before:

“Being then, a prophet, and knowing that, “***with an oath***”, God “***had sworn unto him, of the fruit of his loins, to seat on his throne***” [quoting Psalm 132:11],

With foresight, spake he [David] concerning **the resurrection of the Christ**—that “***neither was He abandoned unto Hades, nor did***” His flesh “***see corruption***” [quoting Psalm 16:10].

The same Jesus, hath God **raised up**, whereof, all we, are witnesses! **By the right hand of God, therefore, having been exalted**, also, *the promise of the Holy Spirit* * having received from the Father, He hath poured out this which, yourselves, do see and hear.
(Acts 2:30-36, Rotherham).

* [We cannot pass by, that with nearly one voice, all versions have here “the Holy Spirit” (with capital letters i.e. The Holy Spirit Himself). We will ignore those (thankfully few) modern versions which translate that our *Lord* here personally received “The Holy Spirit” – which self-evidently is unscriptural nonsense. However is it correct that this text refers to the Holy Spirit Himself?

Literally the text is:

“THIS Jesus raised up God...

THEREFORE [*oun*: “then, therefore”: particle indicating that something necessarily follows after something else]

to the right hand of God having been exalted,
and the promise *tou pneumatos tou hagiou*
receiving from the Father

HE [Jesus] poured out *this* which you both see and hear”.
(Acts 2:33)

Let us note the following:

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ received THE promise (with the definite article) *tu pneumatou tou hagiou* from the Father.

Grammatically the definite article refers back to a *previously* mentioned promise [*epaggelia*] which is from the *Father*.

Which promise is this then, which is the promise from the Father? Is there in the context a previously clearly stated promise [*epaggelia*] from *the Father*?

Absolutely: in Acts 1:45 our Lord Jesus Christ directly refers to the FATHER'S promise [*epaggelia*]:

“And, being assembled together with them, He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait for the promise** [*epaggelia*] **of the Father, which**

“ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with holy spirit [*pneuma hagion*; no definite article] **not many days hence”.**

Acts 2:2-4 describes how – at Pentecost - the disciples received what our Lord had said, that the Father had promised:

“And they were all **filled with holy spirit** [*pneuma hagion*; no definite article – this is what the Holy Spirit filled them *with*, namely: *pneuma hagion*: i.e. holy spirit] and began to speak with other tongues, AS the Spirit [*to pneuma*, the Holy Spirit Himself] gave them utterance”.

Our risen Lord Jesus Christ also refers to this promise of the Father in Luke 24:49:

“And, behold, I send **the promise of my Father upon you**: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, **until ye be endued with power from on high**” [*dunamis ek hypsous*].

And, as we have stated before, this – indisputably and conclusively - defines for us *how* the disciples were enabled: by being baptized with holy spirit, *which is defined as POWER from ON HIGH*; they were endued from ON HIGH with this power, i.e. holy spirit [*pneuma hagion*].

2. IF we allow Scripture to speak for itself, the words in Acts 2:33: *“the promise ...receiving from the Father”* indisputably refer to the promise of the Father stated by our Lord in Acts 1:4-5, and further mentioned in Acts 2:2

3. This promise from the Father is in Acts 2:33 described as *“tēn epaggelian [“the promise”] tou pneumatou tou hagiou”* (with double definite article; literally: : “the spirit the holy” – but in the genitive case).

How shall we then understand the genitive here?

It is correct that *pneuma hagion* without the article *always* refers to “holy spirit”, i.e. “POWER from ON HIGH”, and never refers to The Holy Spirit Himself.

[There are over 50 such occurrences in the NT, nearly all of them wrongly translated The Holy Spirit (with capital letters) in most versions].

It is equally correct that *pneuma hagion* with one (or double) definite article very often – indeed most of the time – means The Holy Spirit Himself.

But NOT *always*.

The definite article is *also* often used grammatically to refer back to and identifying something which has been mentioned previously.

Only the context and sense can determine if that is the case.

4. We can say with certainty that Acts 2:33 does not mean The Holy Spirit Himself *because* we have the mentioned genitive.

IF the reference was to The Holy Spirit Himself, the text would read: “...the promise of *The Holy Spirit* receiving from the Father”, or “...receiving *The Holy Spirit’s* promise from the Father” (as indeed nearly all versions have it).

Because the translators in nearly all the versions assume this to be correct, and assume that the genitive here is the ‘genitive of Origin’, they all so translate, *as if the promise is The Holy Spirit’s promise*, i.e. *as if* The Holy Spirit is the One Who is making the promise.

BUT – although the Greek certainly permits it – this is Scripturally (and logically) plain wrong, because:

(a) the promise is in the immediate context specifically identified as the Father’s promise, and

(b) The Holy Spirit does NOT MAKE ANY PROMISES. Search the Scriptures! The FATHER and the SON both make promises and covenants. The Holy Spirit does not. It is not His work.

5. Only the context can then tell us which genitive we have here. In context it seems obvious that it the ‘genitive of Relations’ (“of” often being equal to “concerning” or “pertaining to”).

Since all of chapter 2 in Acts is about “*this* which you both see and hear”, namely that the disciples were endued with “power from on High” and therefore spoke in tongues, the context of Acts 2:33 indicates that “*tēn epaggelian tou pneumatos tou hagiou*” shall be understood to mean:

“the promise [from the Father] *concerning the spirit the holy*” (namely *that* spirit, the holy one, previously referred to).

(It is interesting that e.g. *the Amplified Bible* comes close to the real meaning of the text IF we change the capital letters in “the Holy Spirit” to small letters:

“[Jesus]...Being therefore lifted high by *and* to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promised blessing which is the [i.e. aforementioned] **holy spirit**, He has made this outpouring which you yourselves both see and hear”).

The text in Acts 2:33 thus expresses the following:

- THAT when our Lord Jesus Christ was exalted to the right hand of God, then He received also – from the Father – power from on High as promised by the Father, and
- THAT our Lord thereafter poured out this power from on High, i.e. *pneuma hagion* upon the disciples.

But: does this accord with the Scriptures? Does not Scripture say that the Holy Spirit poured out the *pneuma hagion* at Pentecost?

Actually no! *Tradition* says so, but not the Scriptures. Acts 2:2-4 simply states the fact:

“And they **WERE** all filled with holy spirit [*pneuma hagion*; no definite article] and began to speak with other tongues, **AS the Spirit** [*to pneuma*, the Holy Spirit Himself] **gave them utterance**”.

They were – as a matter of fact – filled with *pneuma hagion*, but the only action by The Holy Spirit mentioned here, is that “He gave them UTTERANCE”.

In fact: Acts 2:33 specifically states that “*HE* [our Lord Jesus Christ] poured out *this* which you both see and hear”.

But does not Scripture say that *pneuma hagion* comes from The Holy Spirit?

Actually no! *Tradition* says so, but not the Scriptures.

The Scriptures mention several things which The Holy Spirit does *, including that He sometimes acts as an Agent *through Whom pneuma hagion* is given.

But the main tasks of The Holy Spirit are as stated by our Lord Jesus Christ in John 16:

- “He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment”;
- “He will guide you into all truth: FOR [*gar*] He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come”;
- “He shall glorify ME: FOR [*hoti*: “because”] He shall receive of MINE, and shall shew it unto you. ALL things that the Father hath are MINE: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you”.

* [It is outwith our present scope to expand on this. *Man’s* traditions have wholly mangled what the Scriptures teach about The Holy Spirit Himself and *pneuma hagion* (“holy spirit”), strongly assisted by totally confusing, inconsistent and arbitrary translations, tossing in capital letters as it seems “to fit” best, and finally, in the last century, the growing “tongues movements” and various so-called “evangelical” movements which – sadly and notwithstanding their often and no doubt sincere professed love of our Lord Jesus Christ – add layers of gratuitous emotional and un-scriptural doctrines and teachings of *men*.

As we progress in our studies in Paul’s later epistles, we will endeavor to continue to acknowledge each mention of *pneuma hagion* (with or without the article(s)) and comment as required for understanding of the texts quoted].

Reverting then to our text in Acts 2:30-36:

“For, David, hath not ascended into the heavens; but he saith, himself, - “**Said the Lord unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand Until I make Thy foes thy footstool**” [quoting Psalm 110:1]

Assuredly, then, let all the house of Israel know: that, **both Lord and Christ, hath God made Him, even the same Jesus Whom, ye, crucified!**”

Note again, how the Holy Spirit is *now* revealing the true depths and meaning of the Old Testament texts.

No one reading these three Psalms then, would be able to understand their full meaning – because in God’s purposes such full meaning was not to be revealed before the Lord Jesus Christ had been manifested.

In fact, our Lord Himself asked the Pharisees about Psalm 110:

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, “*What think ye of Christ? whose son is He?*”

They say unto Him, “*The Son of David*”.

He saith unto them, “*How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying,*

“The LORD said unto my Lord,

Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?”

If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?”

And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions” (Matthew 22:41-46, KJV).

The Pharisees, whose whole life revolved around studying the Scriptures, could not answer.

A few months later, Peter – an uneducated fisherman – not only answered the question, but elaborated on it with the deepest of insight in Psalm 110 and two other Psalms.

How was this possible?

Peter had received instructions from our risen Lord for forty days regarding how “*the Scriptures...testify of ME*”, and had also later received “*power from ON HIGH*”, namely holy spirit [*phenuma hagion*].

Peter was thus chosen by God to be – amongst other things Peter had been chosen for like the prophets of old - the one to reveal this particular deeper truth regarding these Psalms, at this particular time in God’s purpose – after the resurrection of our Lord.

Turning now to our text, there is then the third occasion of God *affirming by oath* regarding something of immense importance for all of KOSMOS:

And, yet more abundantly evident it is—that, according to the likeness of Melchizedek, there is to be raised up, a different priest. Who, not according to a law of commandment dealing with the flesh, hath arisen, but according to the power of an indissoluble life;

FOR [*gar*] it is witnessed—“***Thou, art a priest, age-abidingly, according to the rank of Melchizedek***” [quoting Psalm 110:4].

FOR, [*gar*] a setting aside, doth, indeed, take place, of a foregoing commandment, by reason of its own weakness and unprofitableness,— **FOR** [*gar*], the law, perfected [*teleioō*], nothing; but there is the superinducing of a better hope,—through which we draw near unto God.

AND, inasmuch as not apart from oath-taking—

FOR [*gar*], they, indeed, apart from oath-taking, have been made priests,
BUT [*de*] **HE, with an oath-taking**, through Him that was saying unto Him—
“***The Lord sware, and will not regret, Thou, art a priest, age-abidingly***”
[quoting Psalm 110:4]

By as much as this, hath, Jesus, become Surety of a **better** covenant also.
(Hebrews 7:15-22, Rotherham).

On all the three identified occasions, Psalm 110 is quoted in context.

On all the three occasions – *and only on those* - God did not only swear by an oath, but added a further affirmation:

- I have *sworn by Myself*, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, ***and shall not return***” (Isaiah 45:23, quoted in Romans 14 and Philippians 2).
- “The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; ***He will not turn from it***” (Psalm 132:11, quoted in Acts 2);
- “***The Lord sware, and will not regret***” (Psalm 110:4, quoted in Hebrews 7).

[Nowhere else do we find such explicit further affirmation, which itself further alerts us to the particular importance of these three occasions, and their subject matter.

Having searched the more than 170 occurrences in the Scriptures, where something is sworn, or confirmed by an oath (mostly by *men*), the approx. 30 times GOD is referred to as having sworn or made an oath, the statement is often either: as the Lord “*hath sworn unto the* (or “thy”) *fathers*” (i.e. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), or: “*I have sworn by Myself*” (or “*the Lord has sworn by Himself*”).

Most of the occurrences involve God swearing as JEHOVAH (His Name mostly used when God is referring to His covenant relationship with men – translated by “LORD” in the KJV).

However there are a number of other occasions, where other of God’s Names are referred to and/or where God swears not “by Himself”, but something else (e.g. by His Throne or His Banner, as we have seen) including the following:

- “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God [*Jehovah Elohim*] : the LORD thy God [*Jehovah Elohim*] hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: BUT BECAUSE the LORD loved you, and BECAUSE He would keep the oath which He had sworn [*shaba`*] unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt”. (Deuteronomy 7: 6-8, KJV).

- “That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God [*Jehovah Elohim*] and into His oath, which the LORD thy God [*Jehovah Elohim*] maketh with thee this day:

That He may establish thee to day for a people unto Himself, and that He may be unto thee a God [*Elohim*], as He hath said unto thee, and as He hath sworn [*shaba`*] unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath;

But with him that standeth here with us this day before the LORD our God [*Jehovah Elohim*] , and also with him that is not here with us this day”.

(Deuteronomy 29:12-15, KJV).

- “The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn [*shaba`*] unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God [*Jehovah Elohim*] and walk in His ways”. (Deuteronomy 28:9, KJV).

- “The LORD hath sworn [*shaba`*] by His Right Hand, and by the Arm of His Strength...” (Isaiah 62:8, KJV).

- “...Behold, I have sworn [*shaba`*] by My Great Name, saith the LORD that My Name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD [*Adonai Jehovah*] liveth.“ (Jeremiah 44:26, KJV).

- “The LORD of Hosts [*Jehovah Zebaoth*] hath sworn [*shaba`*] by Himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee [i.e. Babylon].

He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world [LXX: oikomene] by His Wisdom, and hath stretched out the Heaven [i.e. “Heavens” (in plural)] by His understanding”. (Jeremiah 51:15, KJV),

- “The Lord GOD [*Adonai Jehovah*] hath sworn [*shaba`*] by His Holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you [you: i.e. “the kine (derogatory for “women”) in Bashan, in the mountains of Samaria”, v.1], that He will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks”. (Amos 4:2, KJV; God likewise swears by His Holiness in Psalm 89:35).

- “The Lord GOD [*Adonai Jehovah*] hath sworn [*shaba`*] by Himself, saith the LORD the God of Hosts [*Jehovah Elohim Zebaoth*] ...” (Amos 6:8, KJV).

- “The LORD hath sworn [*shaba`*] by the Excellency* of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their [i.e. Israel’s evil] works” (Amos 8:7, KJV).

* [*ga'own*: “exaltation, majesty, excellence”, or (negatively) “pride, arrogance”; Gesenius reads “pride” in this text.

The versions are divided whether to understand “excellency” (e.g. KJV, Bishops Bible, Geneva Bible, ASV, Young, Rotherham, Webster, Darby (“glory”), or “pride” (e.g. Wycliffe, Coverdale, HNV, ESV; likewise Vulgata: (*superbia*: “pride”), and LXX (*huperēphania*: “pride, arrogance, haughtiness, disdain”).

Scripture gives us the answer to what is the correct understanding of Amos 8:7. Immediately prior - in Amos 6:8 - we read that

“The Lord Jehovah [*Adonai Jehovah*] hath sworn by Himself, saith Jehovah, the God of hosts [*Jehovah Elohim Zebaoth*], I abhor the pride [*ga'own*] of Jacob, and hate his palaces; and I will deliver up the city with all that is therein” (Darby).

It should be self-evident that the Lord God does not swear in Amos chapter 8, by something which He calls an “abhorrence” in chapter 6, especially since God in chapter 6 already “*has sworn by Himself*” that He “abhors Jacobs pride”.

Also: if “pride” was correct, it would be the only time in the Scriptures that God swore by something He otherwise abhors, even “pride”, which is also the original sin of Satan.

Hence we would assert that “excellency” is the correct understanding].

- “...they [i.e. the nations] shall be afraid of the LORD our God [*Jehovah Elohim*] and shall fear because of Thee.

Who is a God ['EL] like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy... Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn [*shaba`*] unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah 7: 18-20, KJV).

- “For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as He hath said, “As I swear in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world [*kosmos*]”. (Hebrews 4:3, ASV).

Paul is quoting from Psalm 95:11: “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known My ways: Unto whom I swear [*shaba`*] in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest” (KJV).

In Hebrews 4:3, Paul takes his quote exactly as written in the Septuagint (LXX).

[Some versions, (e.g. KJV, Young, Rotherham), translate in Hebrews 4:3: “As I have sworn in My wrath, *IF* [*ei*] they shall enter into My rest” – which is literally correct; however the particle *ei* (here used conditionally) is – according also to *Thayer*, citing

Hebrews 4:3 - here used to suppress the condition, demanding the sense “if” namely: “by no means”. Hence it is also correct – and clearer - to translate: “they shall not enter into My rest”].

This is the only instance of God swearing in His wrath, and – interestingly – Paul uses the quote to prove, that since these did not – through *unbelief* – entered into God’s rest, this implies and means that we – as *believers* – will enter into His rest.

Note also that in Hebrews chapter 3, Paul likewise quotes Psalm 95.
In Hebrews 3: 7 Paul says:

"Wherefore, EVEN AS THE HOLY SPIRIT SAITH",

followed by the quotation from Psalm 95 (with Paul again quoting from the Septuagint (LXX) Greek translation of the Hebrew text).

In other words:

1. It is the Holy Spirit *, Who speaks in Psalm 95.
2. It is therefore also the Holy Spirit, Who - through His servant Paul - confirms the fact that the particular part of Psalm 95 quoted from the Septuagint (LXX) in Hebrews chapter s 3 and 4, expresses the additional true and deeper meaning of the original Hebrew - which no one could know before Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews.

* ["The Holy Spirit": *to pneuma to hagian*: The Holy Spirit Himself].

The fundamental importance of GOD swearing an oath is surely that which is expressed by the prophet Isaiah:

**“The LORD of Hosts [Jehovah Zebaoth] hath sworn [shaba`], saying:
Surely AS I have thought, SO shall it come to pass;
and AS I have purposed, SO shall it stand”.**
(Isaiah 14:24, KJV).

In fact: the apostle Paul explains in the near context, WHY God would here swear an oath:

“...IN ORDER THAT [*hina*], not [*mē*] slothful, ye may become, but [*de*] imitators of them who, through faith and patience, were becoming heirs of the promises [*klēronomos*].

FOR [*gar*], when to Abraham God made promise, seeing He had no one greater by whom to swear, “He sware by Himself”,—saying—“Truly, if blessing I will bless thee, and, multiplying, I will multiply thee”; [quoting Genesis 22:16 *et seq*].

And, thus, being patient, he attained unto the promise.

FOR [*gar*] men by the greater one, swear, and, with them, an end of **all** gainsaying by way of confirmation is, **the oath**:

Wherein God, being, more abundantly disposed to shew forth unto the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His counsel, mediated, with an oath,—

IN ORDER THAT [*hina*], through means of two unchangeable things, in which it was impossible for God to make Himself false, a mighty consolation, we might have, who have fled along to grasp, the fore-lying hope [KJV: “the hope set before us”], Which we have, as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm, “*and entering into the interior of the veil*” [quoting Leviticus 16:2,12]

Where a Forerunner in our behalf hath entered, even **Jesus**, Who, “according to the rank of Melchizedek”, hath become, **a high-priest “unto times age-abiding”** [quoting Psalm 110:4]. (Hebrews 6: 12-20, Rotherham *with emphasis*).

From this wonderful text we can therefore understand the following:

1. The Hebrews are exhorted to become “imitators”, or “followers” (KJV), of them who, through faith and patience, were becoming heirs of the promises [*klēronomos*]; namely the promises made to the of Old Testament saints (as we considered in Chapter 1) whereby:

“And **these all** [the “called out” Old Testament saints referred to in chapter 11, also called *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones*] having obtained witness through their faith, **obtained NOT the promise**,

God having **foreseen** concerning **US** [the New Testament Hebrews exhorted by Paul to walk in similar faith (cp. Hebr 6:12: “*followers* [*imitators*] of them who through faith...”)]

some better thing,

in order that THEY [the *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones* comprising the Old Testament saints]

should NOT be completed or filled up to the full, separate from US” [i.e. should not – without “us” – reach the full complement of those comprising the *Ekklēsia of the Firstborn ones*].

2. God “more abundantly” [*perissoteron*] disposed to show something to the heirs of promise!

[*perissoteron*: “exceeding abundantly, supremely, extraordinary, surpassing, uncommon, pre-eminence, more eminent, more remarkable, more excellent” (*Strong/Thayer*) occurs only 3 other places in the New Testament:

- “And He charged them that they may tell no one, but the more He was charging them, the more abundantly they were proclaiming it” (Mark 7:36, Young);
- “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Corinthians 15:10, KJV);
- “And it is yet more abundantly most evident, if according to the similitude of Melchisedek there doth arise another priest” (Hebrews 7:15, Young)].

3. This something which God disposed “most abundantly” to show (i.e. “to prove”) to the heirs of promise was: “**the unchangeableness** (“immutability”) **of His counsel**” (Hebrews 6:17).

[“to show” is *epideiknumi*:” to exhibit, show, to bring forth to view...to prove, demonstrate, set forth to be known and acknowledged” (*Strong/Thayer*); from *epi* (as an intensive) and *deiknuō*: “show, exhibit, to show by making known, or by way of proving” (*Vine*).

First occurrence of *epideiknumi* is in Matthew 16:1: “The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and *tempting* [*peirazō*; same word as in the six Temptations] desired Him that He would shew them a sign from heaven” (i.e. a sign as proof).

First occurrence of *deiknuō* is in Matthew 4:8 (6th Temptation):

“Again [*palin*], the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world [*kosmos*], and the glory of them”;

“the unchangeableness”: *ametathetos* [which occurs only twice in the New Testament, namely in Hebrews 6:17 and 18]: “an adjective signifying “immutable” (*a* [*alpha*], negative, *metatithemi*, “to change”).

In Hebrews 6:17 the word is used in the neuter with the article, as a noun, denoting “the immutability,” with reference to God’s counsel.

Examples from the papyri show that the word was used as a technical term in connection with wills, which “*connotation adds considerably to the force of Hebrews 6:17*” (*Vine*).

In Hebrews 6:18 the “two immutable things” are the promise and the oath].

4. GOD is proving *this* immutability of His counsel here by the means of TWO *immutable* things, namely the promise *and* the oath, by which two things it is impossible for God to make Himself false (literally: “impossible for God to lie”).

And God proves this immutability in this way FOR THE PURPOSE THAT:

“**a mighty consolation** WE might have who have fled along to grasp the fore-lying HOPE [KJV: “the hope set before us”],

Which we have, as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm, “*and entering into the interior of the veil*” [quoting Leviticus 16:2,12].

[ASV and Darby translate: “...that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is WITHIN the veil”].

God's "strong encouragement" or "mighty consolation" is *ischuros* ["mighty"] *paraklēsis* ["comfort"].

[*paraklēsis*: "a calling to one's side" (*para*: "beside; "kaleō": "to call"); hence: either "an exhortation (of encouragement)", or "consolation, comfort".

We recognize the word in "Comforter" (or Paraclete: *Parakletos*) as used of both the Holy Spirit and our Lord Jesus Christ (see below).

Vine well notes that in e.g. Luke 2:25: "looking for the consolation of Israel" is equivalent to waiting for the coming of the Messiah.

In 2 Thessalonian 2:16 *paraklēsis* combines encouragement with alleviation of grief:

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, Which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation[*paraklēsis*] and good hope through grace..."

Parakletos: "is literally: "called to one's side," i.e. to one's aid, and is primarily a verbal adjective, and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid.

It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1 of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the widest sense, it signifies a "succorer, comforter".

Christ Himself was this to His disciples, by the implication of His word "another Comforter I send you" (*allos*, "another of the same sort" (i.e. "namely like Himself") not heteros: "another of a different kind")

This He says when speaking of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). Likewise in John 14:26; 15:26 and 16:7 our Lord calls the Holy Spirit "the Comforter".

"Comforter" or "Consoler" corresponds to the name "*Menahem*," given by the Hebrews to the Messiah" (*Vine*; our excerpt, edit and emphasis);

ischuros: "strong, mighty," akin to *ischus* ["might, strength"]; according to *Vine's* note it is used of:

(a) persons:

- (1) God (Revelation 18:8);
- (2) angels (Revelation 5:2; 10:1; 18:21);
- (3) men (Matthew 12:29 (twice) and parallel passages; Hebrews 11:34; Revelation 6:16 (in the best texts); 19:18);
- (4) the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 4:10 where the Apostle reproaches them ironically with their unspiritual and self-complacent condition);
- (5) of young men in Christ spiritually strong, through the Word of God, to overcome the evil one (1 John 2:14);

(b) things:

- (1) wind (Matthew 14:30 (in some mss.) "boisterous");
- (2) famine (Luke 15:14);
- (3) things in the mere human estimate (1 Corinthians 1:27);
- (4) Paul's letters (2 Corinthians 10:10);

- (5) the Lord's crying and tears (Hebrews 5:7);
- (6) consolation (Hebrews 6:18);
- (7) the voice of an angel (Revelation 18:2 (in the best texts; some have *megas* "great"));
- (8) Babylon (Revelation 18:10);
- (9) thunderings (Revelation 19:6);

ischuroteros: "stronger, mightier" (the comparative degree of *ischuros*) is used:

- of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16);
- of "the weakness of God" as men - *without* understanding - regard it! (1 Cor. 1:25);
- of a man of superior physical strength (Luke 11:22) ;
- in 1 Corinthians 10:22, in a rhetorical question, implying the impossibility of escaping the jealousy of God when it is kindled” (*Vine*; our excerpt, edit and emphasis)].

The HOPE set before these Hebrew believers – those Paul so earnestly exhorted to imitate the Old Testament saints of *that* called out congregation named “The Ekklesia of the Firstborn ones” – that hope being (as so beautifully said) “*an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm*”, pertained to something so vast, so seemingly impossible and so extraordinarily excellent, that no Hebrew could *ever* have imagined this becoming reality:

“***entering into the interior of the Veil***” [“entering into that which is WITHIN the Veil”].

The HIGH Priest ONLY – and on pain of death if not following exactly the instructions in the Law of Moses in all their varied and smallest details regarding dress and cleansings – was the only one allowed to enter into the innermost and most sacred part of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) within the Veil, where the Ark of the Covenant resided, with the Cherubims and the Mercy-Seat.

And the High Priest ONLY was allowed to enter thus only ONCE A YEAR.

It is difficult for us today to truly appreciate the enormity of what Paul says here, and to convey the immense and shocking impact it would deliver to a then Hebrew believer “*zealous of the Law*” (Acts 21:20).

For over *1500 years* every single son and daughter of Israel would have been taught – from infancy – the Law of Moses every day, learned most if not all of it by heart, and lived their whole life around the various annual set feasts and daily offerings and rituals at the Tabernacle and the Temple.

The whole history of the Chosen People – triumphs and disasters, blessings and judgments – revolved around one fundamental command:

“Thou shalt have NO other gods BEFORE ME” (Exodus 20:3).

Our Lord Jesus Christ said it thus, when asked: “*Which is the first [prōtos: first in rank, importance; chief] commandment of all?*”.

“And Jesus [quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5] * answered him:

“The first of all the commandments is,

“Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord**;

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength”;

this is the first commandment”.

(Mark 12:28-30, KJV; *Rotherham emphasis*).

* [“Hear, O Israel; **The Lord our God is one Lord**”. The Companion Bible notes that in the Hebrew this reads:

“Hear, O Israel, Jehovah (the Self and ever existing One) our Elohim is one Jehovah”, where “one” is the Hebrew *'echad*, a compound unity (Latin: *unus*) one made up of others: Genesis 1:5 (one of 7); 2:11 (one of 4); 2:21 (one of 24); 2:24 (one made up of two); 3:22 (one made up of the three); 49:16 (one of 12); Numbers 13:23 (one of a cluster). So Psalm 34:20 etc.

It is not *yachiyd*, which is (Latin) *unicus*, unique – a single or only one, and occurs only 12 times: Genesis 22:2 (“...thy son, thine only son Isaac...); Genesis 2:12,16; Judges 11:34; Psalm 22:20; 25:16; 35:17; 68:6; Proverbs 4:3; Jeremiah 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zechariah 12:10].

The whole of Israel’s existence and the Law of Moses revolved around the absolute HOLINESS of Almighty God – and the consequent demands of only approaching God in strict accordance with the Law.

And NOW the apostle Paul tells these believing Hebrews that *they* can enter The Innermost Sanctuary!

And this is not even the Sanctuary on earth!

This is the TRUE Sanctuary in the Heavens, they can enter.

And Paul tells them, that it is the Lord God, Jehovah Himself, Who by “MIGHTY Consolation” encourages them towards this hope.

It is not surprising that many would shy away from this overwhelming truth, and struggle to comprehend and grasp this hope: it was *too* large, *too* unbelievable, *too* high, *too* incomprehensible - just as Abraham was put in front of a similar overwhelming and large and incredible hope.

HOWEVER

“Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness”.

(Romans 4:3, ASV).

Yes, more than that:

“Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; AND he was called the Friend of God”.

(James 2:23, ASV).

[It is also not surprising that the Pharisees and Jews were incensed and accused Paul: “Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law” (Acts 18:3), not understanding that, on the contrary, Paul was preaching how true belief in the risen Lord and Christ – Israel’s Messiah – fulfilled the *purpose* of the Law.

In fact: it was rare for our Lord Jesus Christ to encounter any of the so-called Teachers of the Law (Scribes), Pharisees, Sadducees or Elders – the theological and religious leaders of the day – who had any true understanding of the Scriptures. They “neither *knew* the Scriptures, nor the power of God”, nor understood or believed that “the Scriptures...testify of ME”, and therefore did not believe Moses’ writing, and made void the word of God by their traditions (and - sadly – our own day evidences the same).

In Mark 12, however, there *was* a rare occasion where our Lord was asked an honest question by a Scribe, namely which is the most important commandment (as quoted above). And when our Lord had answered, *this* particular Scribe did show understanding of the whole purpose of the Law:

“And the scribe said unto Him, “*Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, IS MORE THAN ALL WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES”.*

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly [*nounechōs*; literally: "mind-possessing" (*nous*, "mind, understanding," *echo*, "to have"); "wisely, intelligently"] He said unto him, “*Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*”. (Mark 12: 32-34, KJV)].

The HOPE – this magnificent and (to a Hebrew in particular) nearly unbelievable and most wonderful hope – which Paul was setting forth, had as its foundation and was by reason of - in itself - *a very simple fact*:

“Where a Forerunner in our behalf hath entered, even **Jesus**, Who, “according to the rank of Melchizedek”, hath become, **a high-priest “unto times age-abiding”** [quoting Psalm 110:4]. (Hebrews 6: 20, Rotherham *with emphasis*).

But this – on the face of it – simple fact contains, as we shall see, some of the deepest truths in the Scriptures.

The hope is *solely* connected with and anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ HIMSELF having entered into the Innermost Sanctuary “as a *Forerunner on our behalf*” *whereby* our Lord would be “**...bringing many sons unto glory**” (Hebrews 2:10).

[*Oswald Chambers* – in his “My utmost for His Highest” (1935) - in the note to Luke 24:26: “Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” has this fine comment:

“Our Lord’s Cross is the gateway into His life. His resurrection means that He has the power to convey His life to me. When I was born again, I received the very life of the risen Lord from Jesus Himself.

Christ's resurrection destiny— His foreordained purpose— was to bring "*many sons to glory*" (Hebrews 2:10).

The fulfilling of His destiny gives Him the right to make us sons and daughters of God. We never have exactly the same relationship to God that the Son of God has, but we are brought by the Son into the relation of sonship.

When our Lord rose from the dead, He rose to an absolutely new life— a life He had never lived before He was God Incarnate. He rose to a life that had never been before. And what His resurrection means for us is that we are raised to His risen life, not to our old life.

One day we will have a body like His glorious body, but we can know here and now the power and effectiveness of His resurrection and can "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Paul's determined purpose was to "know Him *and the power of His resurrection*" (Philippians 3:10)]

AND: our Lord Jesus Christ entered the Heavenly Sanctuary: HE Who

"*ACCORDING to the rank of Melchizedek*", hath become, **a HIGH-PRIEST "unto times age-abiding"** ((Hebrews 6: 20, Rotherham).

(Continued in our next)