

The Crucifixion of Jesus

MATTHEW 27; MARK 15; LUKE 23; and JOHN 19 are all chapters of our Bible that cover that most important day when Jesus Christ died for our sins!!! May we always remember that day when ...*Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures*;... 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3. Was there ever a more important day in the history of man? Ponder this question in your heart for a while, and we will answer it later on in this study, Lord willing. Consider in your thoughts this statement found in REVELATION 13:8 concerning Jesus ...*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. The day Christ died for our sins was carefully planned from the foundation of the world, so the importance of this day that Christ died for our sins can not be over emphasized, or under pondered.

LUKE 23:26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.* Let's also here read MARK 15:21 *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.* Also we should read these same facts found in MATTHEW. MATTHEW 27:32 *And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.* The Gospel According to St. JOHN does not make mention of this Simon of Cyrene.

These three scriptures contain a lot of intriguing facts, which helps us further appreciate what the Holy Ghost reveals to us here. Let's start our examination of these facts by noting that Cyrene is now the city of Tripoli, Libya in Africa, which lies west of Egypt. There were many Jews there, and these Cyrenian Jews were in the same habit as were all of the Jews, to go to Jerusalem during these major feast times, such as the Passover, which we are currently discussing. We find on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2:5 & 10 that there were dwelling in Jerusalem devout Jews out of every nation under heaven, some who came from the parts of Libya about Cyrene. Later in the church at Antioch, Syria in ACTS 13:1 we find certain prophets, and teachers named, and one was "Lucius of Cyrene." So we find it rather common to find devout Jews from Cyrene mentioned in scripture.

The second fact we know from these three scriptures is that this man from Cyrene name was Simon, which means: hearkening, or the hearkener. Let me quote here what Sister Mary Bodie wrote about him in her MATTHEW study book. "Another man is made to carry His (Jesus) cross after Him. And this too is significant: for this man, Simon "the hearkener," simply speaks of the obedience of faith. He is seen, as Luke tells, coming out of the country, and this fact is the cause of the cross being laid upon him. Note that he does not die upon it. He only bears it after Christ. This honor is the privilege of every one that takes his place as rejected with his Lord and Master, and thus walks in separation from the world. If we are spiritually dull of hearing, we may escape the world's persecution; but we will also escape the privilege of jointly sharing in Christ's throne and its honors." {End of quote from Sister Bodie.} We will discuss more of this separated walk that the full overcomer enjoys as they daily take up their cross and follow Christ. We also read about this in LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* This is walking with the Lord like Enoch did, who in the end was translated!

Are you a hearkener like Simon? Seven times in REVELATION we read the statement: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* This speaks to us in this Church Age that will attain SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, that we need to have ears to hear what the Spirit saith. Eight more times in New Testament scripture we find the phrase: "ears to hear, let him hear." These phrases are further broken down into three statements: "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear...*" ...MATTHEW 11:15; MARK 4:9; LUKE 8:8 and LUKE 14:35. The second phrase is: "*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear...*" found in MATTHEW 13:9, and 13:43. The third phrase found in MARK 4:23 and 7:16 is: "*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*" These statements all reference the spiritual ear by which we receive the word of truth, by which we also hear the high calling message that the Apostle Paul preached, and by which our spiritual ear will hear the first trumpet sound when the Lord comes to catch His Bride away!

We just read Sister Bodies comments that also apply to our current study verse: LUKE 23:26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.* Here is what Brother Hawkins here wrote in his LUKE study book on this scripture. "The time for "slaughter" has come for the Lamb, and He permits Himself to be led away without the slightest hint of resistance. From the difference in John's account that Jesus bore His own cross (JOHN 19:17) and our present text, we can only conclude that Jesus started to Golgotha beneath the weight of the cross, but because of the scourging already endured, He was unable to continue. Thus Simon was compelled to carry it. Although Simon obviously had no choice in this matter, the meaning of his name ("hearing") and the act of bearing the cross, hold much fragrant instruction for us. He is a picture of those who are dedicated and listen to the voice of the Master today. The cross, which Simon bore, is not a cross of redemption whereon he died, but rather speaks of the sufferings which he endured for the cause of Christ and His people. Paul describes this same truth in COLOSSIANS 1:24: *"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind (lacking) of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake which is the church."* It is apparent from this verse that some of the sufferings of Christ were left behind on purpose for us to bear. As noted, we do not in any way make atonement, but those who would totally follow Christ are going to suffer some of the same persecutions and feel the tremendous pressure from the same rebellious attitudes, which Jesus felt. All these are symbolized by the cross, which Simon was willing to bear." {End of quoting Brother Hawkins.} There is plenty of food for thought in this commentary, which goes along with the statement we read above in LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* {Study also MATTHEW 10:38; 16:24; MARK 8:34; 10:21; and LUKE 14:27.}

LUKE 23:26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.* Next make note of the fact that both Mark, and Luke, followers also of the Apostle Paul, both state that this man Simon, a Cyrenian was coming **out of the country**. The phrase "**out of the country**" is found eight times in scripture. We found in our meaning of the Bible numbers study, that there are five meanings associated with the number eight: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. All five of these meanings point us to Christ Jesus in one way or another. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 tells us that we are a NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus. In JOHN 3:1-16 we find the word "born" used eight times as Jesus told Nicodemus "...ye must be born again..." ...JOHN 3:7. This was the NEW BIRTH Jesus told Nicodemus about. The eighth day of the week is the same as the first day of the week, and on the first day of the week, which is also the eighth day Jesus arose from the dead, thus eight is also a number of RESURRECTION. Also the first day of the week is a NEW BEGINNING of a new week. We also learned in our meaning of the Bible numbers study that the number eight is also a number associated with the BRIDE, and often times points us to the BRIDE of Christ.

How do these five facts correlate to the phrase "**out of the country**" is found eight times in scripture? All who have accepted Christ Jesus as their own personal Saviour, have heard this with their hearing ears of faith, and believed in their heart that "...ye must be born again..." as JOHN 3:7 states. All who are saved believe ROMANS 10:9 & 10 -- *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Knowing all of this, all believers have learned in some degree or another the facts of the NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus; the new NEW BIRTH; have thus achieved a NEW BEGINNING in their life; knowing the RESURRECTION to be true, having believed ...*that God hath raised him from the dead.* However all believers, contrary to popular teaching, will not be in the BRIDE of Christ! Those that will rule and reign with Christ as His BRIDE, will be the equivalent of those, who like Simon came "**out of the country**," came from without the camp in other words. The Holy Ghost today is still searching among believers for those who have an ear for His Voice, and will seek Him even without the camp. HEBREWS 13:13 even tells us: *Let us go forth therefore unto him*

without the camp, bearing his reproach. The word “reproach” here is such as Christ suffered, for the cause of God, and from his enemies.

I came upon a treasure written for me, and you, concerning this subject. This was written by a well studied, and wise gifted Bible student. “The important thing here then is not just going without the camp, but why? We are to go forth unto Him bearing His reproach. To walk with Him no matter what. To separate yourself from anything or anyone who would hinder your fellowship and relationship with the Lord. To learn the lessons which Paul has instructed us, and to follow him as he followed Christ. There are things which are not necessarily sinful or wrong which we might do, but would take your time and attention away from the Lord. Things, which would hinder your full communion with Him, and would keep you from being a full overcomer. To go without the camp unto Him then is putting Him first in every way, fully surrendered, learning His word, walking in the light of it, and making yourself available to do His will. Following His leading alone, not what someone says, but what the Word says, and more than this, what the Word says to you alone -- you are a unique individual with unique problems, trials and test designed by a loving Father just for you with a set of guide lines designed to help you to be an overcomer and win Christ the prize as bridegroom. Millions of people have been saved, but few have gone without the camp unto Him so they could be prepared for that special place.” {End of quoting my Mom.}

The same Greek word translated “reproach” in HEBREWS 13:13 is also found in HEBREWS 11:25 in association with Moses. HEBREWS 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.* Where did God appear unto Moses when He told Him that he would be the one to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt? Study EXODUS 3 and see that Moses was far “**out of the country**” of Egypt when God called him. Study again GENESIS 24 and see how Abraham’s servant sought out a BRIDE for Isaac “**out of the country**” far beyond the land of Canaan. Where did the Apostle Paul receive his gospel message? “**Out of the country**” he studied to be a Pharisee in. Where did Ruth, the future grandmother of both David, and Jesus, find her future husband Boaz? It was “**out of the country**” of Moab. (Study RUTH 1:22; 2:6; and 4:3.) LUKE 23:26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

The Tree

We have been discussing much about the cross of Christ in the last few pages of these notes, and have pointed out the following facts of scripture. There are twenty-eight scriptures that mention the word “cross.” Twenty-eight is the number associated with ETERNAL LIFE. Concerning ETERNAL LIFE we referenced JOHN 5:11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* We also noted that the cross that Jesus died upon is called “his cross” in MATTHEW 27:32; MARK 15:21; JOHN 19:17; COLOSSIANS 1:20; and COLOSSIANS 2:14. The cross upon which Jesus died is also called “the cross of Jesus” in JOHN 19:25; “the cross of Christ” in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:17; GALATIANS 6:12; and PHILIPPIANS 3:18; and “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” in GALATIANS 6:14. Of the twenty-eight scriptures that mention the word “cross,” twenty-two focus specifically upon the cross of Christ. Twenty-two is the number of LIGHT, and when we think of LIGHT we should recall that Jesus is the LIGHT of the world according to JOHN 8:12, and 9:5; Jesus is the LIGHT of men according to JOHN 1:5; and Jesus is the LIGHT of life, which is also noted in JOHN 8:12. Back to the cross, there is so much more to think about when we consider the cross of Jesus, so in this portion of our study concerning Luke, and what he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to write in scripture, we are going to dig a little deeper into some thoughts concerning the cross of Christ. Specifically we are going to examine some things concerning the tree, for the cross of Christ was made from a tree.

It is a profound thought to realize that our loving Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is before all things, and above all things, and in all things, and by Him all things consist, and carefully planned all things in the eternities past, one day planted the seed from which grew the tree that would become the cross of Christ! Furthermore the Holy Ghost begins to explain this starting in GENESIS 1:11 & 12. As we look at these two verses, we are seeing what God created on the third day, and we won't be going in great detail about all of this here in this study. Feel free to read the GENESIS study book of Sister Bodie on the church web site. GENESIS 1:11 *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.* 12 *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.* Here is some of what she wrote in her commentary of these verses. "Observe that the seed has within itself the power of perpetuating its kind; also that it is the earth, figure of the new life, which brings it forth. All this is easy of interpretation and proves again that there is a voice even in nature if our ears are tuned to hear its message. All of God's works in creation testify to redemption. They are designed to witness to mankind. *"He that receiveth seed into good ground is he that heareth the Word and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty"* {MATTHEW 13:23} -- three grades answering most beautifully to the grass, herb, and tree. The good ground is the Divine life, the new birth, which we receive upon the simple condition of faith in the Word, the seed, and which will bring forth a full harvest, if not hindered by unbelief. The fruit is in the life -- love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. *"Being now made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness..."* ROMANS 6:22." {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} She here also partially quoted from GALATIANS 5:22 & 23. GALATIANS 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,* 23 *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* 24 *And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.* 25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* We will visit this thought again a little further in this portion of our study.

In GENESIS 2:9 we are introduced to "**the tree of life.**" GENESIS 2:9 *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* "The tree of life" speaks of Christ, and conversely "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" speaks of the tree of death. This "tree of knowledge of good and evil" was the tree Satan deceived Eve into eating from. We read in 1 TIMOTHY 2:14 -- *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.* There was a lot of thought that took place before Adam willingly ate of the fruit. Adam didn't want to be alone, apart from his Bride, his lovely Eve, so he willingly also ate of the fruit. ROMANS 5:14 tells us that Adam *...is the figure of him that was to come.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45-47 further instructs us of the first man Adam, who is of the earth, earthy, and the second man Adam who is the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. The second man Adam, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, didn't want to be alone either, apart from His lovely Bride, so He too, like the first man Adam willingly was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, so that He too would someday have a Bride. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Christ was made sin for us upon the tree that became the cross of Calvary. ROMANS 5:8 further tells us: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Next in ROMANS 5:12 we are told: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

Back to "**the tree of life,**" which speaks of Christ that we find introduced in GENESIS 2:9, note the following. The phrase "**the tree of life**" is found exactly ten times in The Word of God. Ten is the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. What this means is that it is our responsibility to believe God, and it is God's responsibility to honor faith. HEBREWS 11:6 again states it this way: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must*

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Those Old Testament heroes of faith fill up the 11th chapter of HEBREWS with what they were allowed to accomplish by faith. The New Testament Church Age full overcomers will be found in that bridal company that will rule and reign with Christ as His Bride. Note these two verses from REVELATION 22. REVELATION 22:1 *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there **the tree of life**, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.* Where is the Bride of Christ in this scene? Study REVELATION 4:6 & 8, and see that she is in the midst of the throne. Adam, with his relationship to Eve, his wife, is typical of Christ and His Bride. Paradise with **the tree of life** no doubt foreshadows our eternal home with its river of water of life and its tree with its twelve manner of fruit in the New Jerusalem, which we just read about here in REVELATION 22.

Now note the last thing we read about the “**the tree of life**” found in GENESIS, which is noted in GENESIS 3:22-24. GENESIS 3:22 *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of **the tree of life**, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of **the tree of life**.* These Cherubims are typical of the Bride of Christ, fully mature Saints, grown up into the measure of the fulness of Christ, who ...*keep the way of **the tree of life**.*

Again let's note that “**the tree of life**” speaks of Christ, and His wife, the Bride of Christ will be a fully mature woman, who has grown up into Him in all things. We read this in EPHESIANS 4:13-15. EPHESIANS 4:13 *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.* It is interesting to observe that the phrase “grow up” is also found exactly eight times in scripture, a number that also points to the BRIDE of Christ. This principle is also discussed in GALATIANS 2:20, which reads: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* In this statement the cross is implied when Paul notes ...*I am crucified with Christ...* ...*who loved me, and gave himself for me...* upon the cross of Calvary. “**The tree of life**,” which speaks of Christ, is noted by Paul here in GALATIANS 2:20 to live in the believer: ...*but Christ liveth in me.* We are given encouragements by the Apostle Paul to “...*be ye followers together of me...*” in 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16, and “*Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ...*” in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1. Then in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 Paul once again writes: *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* When Paul writes the word “brethren” here, he is really addressing all fellow believers in Christ; Christians, as those who are exalted to the same heavenly place. “Brethren” is an attention getting word as used here to get us to now focus upon Paul's instructions, which immediately follow. Paul's encouragement is to ...*be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* The Greek word Paul uses here, that is translated “followers together” is unique in that it is only used this one time in scripture. Vine's Dictionary doesn't even cover it. The Greek word is *summimetes* {soom-mim-ay-tace'}, number 4831 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and it means exactly what our English says: “followers together.” Paul's actual meaning here is to follow Paul, and his gospel message to this “high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Not all believers are willing to do this because Paul Christian life was a life of complete faith and trust in the Lord, following the leading and guidance of the Holy Ghost as he daily walked with the Lord in pursuit of God's best. Paul's life followed Jesus instructions that we read above in LUKE 9:23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* Paul's life certainly

wasn't a trial free life, far from it. Paul's life was full of impossible obstacles to overcome, which he only did by putting his complete faith and confidence in the Lord. The one hundred chapters we have in our Bible written by our Apostle Paul explain how to do this, and by learning Paul's gospel we too become "followers together," summimetes {soom-mim-ay-tace'} with Paul.

The qualities of the Bride of Christ are enlarged upon in JEREMIAH 17:7 & 8, where we again observe a special mature fruitful tree that represents the life of Christ grown up in a full overcoming Saint.. JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* 8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* In verse 7 we find the heart of the believer who has put his faith and trust in the Lord, and that the Lord is his hope. Paul prayed in EPHESIANS 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:* 18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,* 19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,* 20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* . In these words of Paul's prayer we find the key that unlocks understanding concerning ...*the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,...* of how ...*the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel...* (ROMANS 16:25 and EPHESIANS 3:6). The full overcomer finds their "hope" in our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our "hope." TITUS 2:13 *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

By now we should all know that the only way to be in that rib portion company of Saints from this Church Age, who will be the Bride of Christ, is to be a New Testament worthy of faith. The key to becoming a New Testament worthy of faith is found in HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* In Scott's Friday night Bible class we have been going over the Old Testament worthies of faith, and in HEBREWS 11:1 faith is defined. HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Scott further broke this definition of faith down into the following factual statement: "Faith is the absolute assurance of things hoped for, the proof of the reality of things we cannot see with the natural-eye." The Prophet Jeremiah expressed overcoming faith like this in our text of JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* What does the word "trusteth" mean? "Trusteth," or "trust" is the Old Testament word meaning "faith" or "believe." Thus we could read verse 7 like this, from an amplified translation: "Most blessed is the man who believes in the Lord, and has his faith in the Lord... "

How does faith mature in the life of a believer pursuing God's best? JEREMIAH 17:8 begins to answer this question. In JEREMIAH 17:8 we find how the life of Christ is grown up in the heart of the believer. The representative tree spoken of here in JEREMIAH 17:7 & 8 is Christ within; the Christ that liveth in me that Paul discussed in GALATIANS 2:20. GALATIANS 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* In JEREMIAH 17:8 we close in on the heart of the overcomer, and the results of having 100 per cent hope, faith, confidence, and trust in the Lord. JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

In verse 8 we first see a tree, and not just any tree, but a fruit yielding tree; a her tree with "her roots," and "her leaves;" a tree that represents qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ. The tree in JEREMIAH 17:8 pictures a spiritual man whose heart draws close to the Lord: "For he shall be as a tree..." an immovable tree with deep well watered roots planted in the rich gospel soil of the

grace of God. A tree, or trees in scripture, figuratively, represent men; green trees represent the righteous; dry trees, like the heath in JEREMIAH 17:6 picture the wicked. We read in PSALMS 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* Also in ISAIAH 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.* Once a believer accepts Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour, they are indeed the planting of the LORD.

We find the phases of spiritual growth expounded upon further here in JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted...* . Note that this tree was “planted,” not haphazardly. To plant something requires some fore thought. Accordingly “...he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,... ” (EPHESIANS 1:4 & 5). Oh what fore thought to choose us in Him before the foundation of the world! Truly we believers are ...*called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.* (ISAIAH 61:3). Note what is said in ROMANS 8. ROMANS 8:27 *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*

The next statement of JEREMIAH 17:8 now takes us deeper into the phases of growth of the spiritual man whose heart is after God’s own heart, like David’s was, and like all full overcomers hearts are. JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters,...* . Water in scripture pictures the word of God. In REVELATION 19:13 we read that Jesus ...*is called The Word of God.* JOHN 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

JOHN 7:38 is an amazing verse of scripture. Jesus Christ is the fountain of living water that is ever flowing for the thirsty. Sister Bodie wrote in her commentary of JOHN the following concerning JOHN 7:38. “Before there can be an out flow, there must be an inflow. ...John wrote this Gospel many years after Jesus was glorified, and explains this utterance in the light of history and experience. Not until Jesus was glorified – after His death, resurrection, and ascension – was the Holy Spirit given, and not until He is glorified spiritually in a believer’s heart and life can he have the rivers of living water.” {End of quoting Sister Bodie.} That is why we have the parenthetical Holy Ghost inspired statement the Apostle John wrote next in JOHN 7:39. JOHN 7:39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)* Stated another way, it takes the power of the Holy Ghost in a believer to produce the out flow of the rivers of living water from the fountain of Christ Jesus. We have talked of the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost many times in this Sunday School class, and have often referenced what Jesus told His disciples on the evening of the last supper, which is found in JOHN chapters 14, 15, and 16. JOHN 16:12-15 is one important example of this. JOHN 16:12 *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall*

glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. One more quick thought about the Holy Ghost, in GENESIS 24 Isaac would have never of had Rebekah as his wife had not she had a guide to bring her to him. Our heavenly guide that makes us ready to be the Bride of Christ is the Holy Ghost.

JOHN 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Spiritually speaking the rivers of living waters again represents the Word of God, who is Jesus, upon whom all believers feed and drink in freely His abundant and refreshing Words of life, or as Paul states it in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* REVELATION 22:17 lays out the simple plan of salvation, and states: *...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* In JOHN chapter 4 we find Jesus giving the woman of Samaria the discourse on the water of life, and in so doing He gave her the gift of living water, which is salvation. JOHN 4:14 tells us: *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* Also in JEREMIAH 17:13 we see that the Lord is *...the fountain of living waters.*

The next statement of JEREMIAN 17:8 is most profound. JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river,...* . What kind of tree is a her tree, a tree with “her roots?” Obviously the Lord is looking at more than just a tree here; He is looking at “the joy that was set before Him,” while on the cross; He is looking at that group of full overcomers, who in this church age will end up being the Bride of Christ! He is looking at “her roots;” her heart in other words. This tree has been thought about, fore ordained, planted in good exceedingly rich soil, planted by the endless supply of living waters, and she, this her tree, spreadeth out “her roots.” “Her roots” are hidden, for none of us can see the roots of a tree, or know how far out they have reached, or see what it is they are feeding upon. Considering the overcomers heart, which we also can not see as we look upon one another, but truly the Lord knows what is in our hearts, for again 1 SAMUEL 16:7 tells us: *...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* In other words only He can see how deep “her roots” go. How deep are your roots? PSALMS 119:11 in part reads: *Thy word have I hid in mine heart,...* . The Word of God, the living water, is what the full overcomer feeds upon, taking in the water of life freely, ever searching and reaching unto deeper depths, which the Holy Ghost further reveals unto our own hearts.

In JOHN 5:39 Jesus says: *Search the scriptures;... ..they are they which testify of me.* To Timothy Paul wrote in 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.* Again later in 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 the Apostle Paul once again encouraged Timothy to spread out his roots into deeper soil by stating: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* A few verses later the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy some more, a states in 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* In ACTS 17:11 we find the Apostle Paul briefly visiting Berea. We are told in this verse that: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* In other words, these saints of Berea were quickly spreading out deep roots. They were quickly becoming established in the truth of the Word of God. Paul was only with them a short time, but he instilled in them the importance of searching the scriptures daily, and daily looking for the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river,...* . The word “spreadeth” here in verse 8 is unique in it’s Hebrew usage here in scripture, being used only this one time in the Bible with this meaning: to send away, to send forth, to

send out. The Apostle Paul expressed a similar thought in PHILIPPIANS 3. PHILIPPIANS 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* The Bride of Christ will come from those Holy Ghost filled believers, who “spreadeth out her roots,” and reaches forth unto those things, which are before, and presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Rebekah in GENESIS 24 “*spreadeth out her roots*” when she said in “*I will go*,” in verse 58, for in her heart she had already purposed to marry Isaac.

Consider also the following concerning the roots of this growing tree; that this tree is daily feeding upon the endless supply of living water, from the river of water that is always available to her. This is the process where this special tree is “spreading out her roots.” In other words this tree, this her tree is found, “...reaching forth unto those things which are before,...” and digging deeper and deeper into the exceeding rich soil into which she was planted, ...*the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.* (ISAIAH 61:3). This tree of JEREMIAH 17:8 pictures all those race course runners who become full overcomers because they took root, deep roots, ever spreading out their roots in an ever forward progression of deeper and deeper growth in Christ Jesus, feeding daily upon the Word of God, the river of living water, thus growing in grace and knowledge of their first love, the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 PETER 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.* Are you interested in learning the deeper things of God? If so spread out your roots! Try to exhaust that endless supply of living water.

The word “meditate” defines this process of “spreading out her roots.” One cannot always be reading The Word of God, but one can always “meditate” upon that which we have studied, and read. Mediate means to attend to; to ponder; to care for; to be diligent in. The Lord Himself spoke this unto Joshua in JOSHUA 1:8 *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.* The book of the law was all the scripture Joshua had, and he was to meditate therein day and night. So did Joshua have good success? He is highlighted in HEBREWS 11 as one of the Old Testament worthies of faith. The Apostle Paul wrote two epistles to his son in the faith Timothy, who from his childhood had been taught the Holy Scriptures. Here is something Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 TIMOTHY 4. 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ...15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.* Fourteen times in scripture we find the word “meditate,” and fourteen is the number of DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Can you think of anything better to “mediate” upon? Because when you are mediating upon DELIVERANCE or SALVATION, you are really meditating upon the benefits we have in Christ Jesus. We read in PSALMS 116:12 *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?* Spread out your roots on that thought. The psalmist here, probably David, did some meditating here, and came up with the following: PSALMS 116:13 *I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.* ...PSALMS 116:17 *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.* So in answering his own question ...*What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?*... the psalmist, after some meditating in his own heart came up with ...*I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.* ...*I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.* Thus we find the way of spreading out one’s roots is to call upon the name of the Lord with a heart full of thanksgiving for all of His many benefits towards me as an individual. David was an Old Testament worthy of faith because of his meditating heart being found to be a man after God’s own heart.

Again the river here in JEREMIAH 17:8 speaks of the Holy Ghost, which all full overcomers must freely receive in order to properly spread out their roots. Jesus explains it like this in JOHN 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living*

water. 39 (*But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*) This river never runs dry.

Note the next part of JEREMIAH 17:8 *...and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* We find “heat” and “drought” mentioned in this portion. This speaks of the times of testings and trials. All full overcomers must have these times of testing and trials in their own life, things to overcome in other words, but if you will notice this well established tree with her deep roots is not anxious during such times, but rather shoots down deeper roots! This her tree keeps on feeding. Her foundation is sure. The full overcomer sees the good through such tests. The full overcomer with deep roots, recognizes ROMANS 8:28 in such times when the heat cometh: ROMANS 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Probably one of the most concise commentaries on this thought of how the full overcomer is to deal with tests and trials is found in PHILIPPIANS 4. PHILIPPIANS 4:6 *Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* These seven “things” mentioned in PHILIPPIANS 4:8 all speak to things of an intimate relationship with Christ. A full overcomer will see Jesus in everything that comes their way, thus they *... shall not see when heat cometh,... ... and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

This her tree also has green leaves. Green speaks of resurrection. Jesus said in JOHN 11:25 *...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:...* Green thus points us to the new life that we have in Christ Jesus. We may not be able to see what the roots of this her tree has taken in, or how vast, and far they reach, but we can observe her green leaf. Her leaf is green because she has taken in light. Jesus said in JOHN 8:12 *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Again in JOHN 9:5 Jesus states: *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* If the leaf doesn’t see light, then it isn’t going to be green very long. Cover the green leaf, and it doesn’t take long before it turns yellow, and looks anemic. The full overcomer takes in as much available light as they can; the anemic Christian does not. The full overcomer has an upward gaze, and like this tree of JEREMIAH 17:8 her branches reach out and up, and her leaves takes in all the light they can, and reach out for more.

We learned in grade school that the leaf breathes, and as it does so it purifies the atmosphere around it, thus giving those close by a breath of fresh air in this ever-increasing polluted world. The overcomer too is a breath of fresh air to those nearby repeating words of faith and of good doctrine, which they have learned. {Study 1 TIMOTHY 4:6.}

The green leaves of this special her tree also provide shade, and comfort on an otherwise very hot day. The Apostle Paul expresses this very same thought in 2 CORINTHIANS 1. 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. 6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.*

Brother Hill gave a Bible study on this portion of scripture of many, many years ago, where he expounded his insights to 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7. He emphasized the fact that the words “comfort” or “consolation” are found ten times in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7. Recall that the number

ten has to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. Brother Hill in his Bible notes wrote the following commentary concerning verses 3 & 4 of 2 CORINTHIANS 1. Verses “3 & 4 shows one of the great secrets of great living... i.e., if we would help others efficiently we must recall how God helped us. Forgetfulness in one direction breeds selfishness in another. Where there is no sense of Divine mercy, there is never a big stream of beneficence.” (Beneficence is the fact or quality of being kind or doing good; charity). “It is always the remembrance of Gods mercy that moves us to be merciful, and the same remembrance mingles our mercies with wise and intelligent sight. So what the Lord has done for us, teaches us what to do for others, and how He did it will move us to the same moods. “I forgave thee all thy debt, ought thou not therefore to have compassion on thy fellow servant.” So our obligations are born in our blessings, and if we seriously consider the one, we shall undertake the other. So Paul here asks us to remember the Lords comforts. We are to retrace our steps down the old road, where stumbling in chains, and under an unbearable burden, He in grace, united us, and how again and again, when the road was steep, the burden heavy, and the way dark, He came, and whether it was sorrow, or pain, confusion or despair, He gave us His balms and wine, and that feeble flickering light, was fed and fanned into a cherry flame. We are to take all of these, and touch others, who are as we were. Oh what a need for such today.” {End of quoting Brother Hill’s Bible notes.}

Note in this portion we see that full overcomers are “givers” also, giving of their time, and substance; giving out what they themselves have taken in from the Lord in their time of heat. The Lord Jesus Christ *...Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God...* is also the resurrection and the life manifest by the green leaf in the life of a full overcomer spoken of in JEREMIAH 17:8, whose green leaves provide shade, and comfort to others on an otherwise very hot day.

Back to our study verse of JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* We have discussed many thoughts about this her tree of JEREMIAH 17:8, and there is much more that could be said about this her tree, so here is a couple more thoughts concerning this “her tree” that in so many ways pictures qualities found in the full overcomer. This her tree brings forth fruit, and not only does it bring forth fruit, but our text states: *...neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* These are akin to those found in the parable of the sower found in LUKE 8:15, which reads: *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* In MARK 4:20 we find in this same parable that these of LUKE 8:15 were a hundred fold fruitful! What a farmer would give for a tree that was a hundred fold fruitful, and never cease from yielding fruit. The number 100 we learned in our meaning of the numbers study has to do with COMPLETION. Paul’s gospels contain exactly 100 hundred chapters, and his 100 chapters is what helps us become fully mature. Don’t you want to be one of the ones spoken of in REVELATION 19:7, who is a hundred percent complete; His wife who hath made herself ready?

Consider for a moment what it takes to be hundred fold fruitful, a quality that will be found in the Bride of Christ. JEREMIAH 17:8 gives one more important clue on how this is possible, how *...His wife hath made herself ready...* when it states: *...neither shall cease from yielding...* Yielding shows a willingness to change. We find the word “yielding” seven times in scripture, which speaks to us of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION. We are to yield to the tender loving guiding of the Holy Spirit, who was sent from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ for the express purpose of making His wife ready. The Apostle Paul wrote in GALATIANS 5 how to be a hundred fold fruitful. GALATIANS 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

We could spend a month of Sunday School lessons going over the nine fold fruit Paul discuss in the verses, but we won't do this here. Paul already did this in his one hundred chapters he wrote us. Paul wrote a whole chapter in 1 CORINTHIANS 13 about love, the first mentioned fruit of the Spirit in GALATIANS 5:22. The law never taught old Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, much about love. The Bride of Christ will be one hundred percent full of the love of Christ, which is preeminent love, first in value love, that agape love found in ROMANS 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Ponder this next question in your thoughts in the next few days. On the road to Damascus when Saul of Tarsus got saved, what did he experience for the first time in his life? Was it not the agape love of Christ, and the agape love of God, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life? As he believed, Saul of Tarsus asked our lovely Lord this most important question: "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" ...ACTS 9:7. That staunch law abiding Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, could ask no other question, for the law is a book of "do's" and "don'ts." Christ Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth as ROMANS 10:4 tells us. It took the power of the Holy Ghost in Saul of Tarsus life, and some special revelations by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself unto Saul of Tarsus in Arabia to bring him to the point where he became the Apostle Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles; the Apostle who taught us all the points necessary to be that one hundred percent fruitful vessel, that will be manifest in the Bride of Christ. The Lord answered Saul of Tarsus' question "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" by showing him, and teaching him the agape love of God. Then one day the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write ROMANS 13:8 *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* The Bride of Christ will manifest this agape love of God. So important is this statement to "love one another" that it is repeated thirteen times in New Testament scripture!!! It was Jesus Christ our loving Lord and Saviour, and soon coming bridegroom, who gave us this commandment, and repeated it in the following scriptures. JOHN 13:34 *A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* JOHN 15:12 *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.* ...15:17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another.* May we all let this point sink into our individual heart! Stated another way, may the agape love of God be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us as the Apostle wrote us in ROMANS 5:5. GALATIANS 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.* The Bride of Christ will one hundred percent manifest this fruit.

JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* 8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* Let's look at one last verse of scripture that will finish our commentary on JEREMIAH 17:8. ROMANS 7:4 *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* There are eight "bring forth fruit" statements found in scripture; eight again being a number that also points us to the BRIDE of Christ. She will bring forth fruit unto God, and she too will be found to never ...*cease from yielding fruit.*

We have been discussing in this section concerning the crucifixion of Christ many thoughts concerning "the tree." The cross of Christ was made from a tree, and marvel of marvels, it was Jesus Christ himself who made the tree, which became the cross upon which He died for our sins. This was the plan of the God head from eternities past, that Christ Jesus would die for our sins upon the tree that was the cross of Calvary. REVELATION 13:8 explains this to us, noting that He was ...*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.* Always remember this; Christ laid down His life for us on the cross of Calvary. It was on the cross of Calvary where Christ redeemed us, that is bought us with a price, and that price being His precious blood. 1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received*

by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. The Apostle Paul expressed this same thought in GALATIANS 3:13 where he wrote: *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Paul here makes reference to the cross calling it “a tree.” Paul is quoting from DEUTERONOMY 21 here. DEUTERONOMY 21:22 *And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: 23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.* The tree of Calvary, being the cross upon which Christ Jesus gave Himself for us, and as we just read in GALATIANS 3:13 Christ Jesus also was made a curse for us while redeeming us from the curse of the law! We noted earlier in this study the fact that there are five (GRACE) scriptures, all written by our Apostle Paul, that mentions the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ “gave himself” for our sins, stating in GALATIANS 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.* In GALATIANS 2:20 Paul writes that Jesus Christ ...*gave himself for me.* Put your name there too, Jesus gave Himself for you, that you too could enjoy God’s best for your life! EPHESIANS 5:25 informs us that Christ gave Himself for the church, pointing to the fact that He gave Himself for the Bride of Christ. In 1 TIMOTHY 2:6 Paul again writes of the man Christ Jesus ... *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* TITUS 2:14 explains this about Jesus Christ: *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Our most precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for me, and He gave Himself for you too on the cross of Calvary where He died for our sins! Thank you Jesus for such indescribable love! Thank you Jesus for eternal life! We mentioned this next portion of scripture earlier when we were discussing spreading out our roots: PSALMS 116:12 *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. 17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.* Thank you Lord for giving yourself for me!!! As Brother Hill used to say: “what a marvel.”

We also have examined in this section some thoughts concerning “**the tree of life**,” which speaks of Christ, and His wife, the Bride of Christ will be a fully mature woman, who has grown up into Him in all things. The spiritual tree pictured in JEREMIAH 17:7 & 8 expresses the Christ life being fully grown up in the life of the Bride of Christ. The Apostle Paul called her “the joy that was set before Him” in HEBREWS 12:2. HEBREWS 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* The joy that was set before Him was something that He had not yet experienced, something He didn’t yet have, something great, something large, and something He still looks forward to. The joy that was set before Him was His Bride.

There are a couple of more points concerning “the tree” that points to the cross of Christ, which we will look at before returning to the concluding verses of LUKE 23. In LUKE 23:31 we find Jesus making a statement concerning a “green tree.” In LUKE 23:31 *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* The “green tree” here is a reference to Jesus Christ Himself, who in this instance was being led to His death upon the cross of Calvary. The meaning of these words was that they were in the process of destroying the only thing with life in it, Jesus Christ the way, the truth, and the life. He was the “green tree.” It is interesting to note that there are only thirteen verses of scripture that use the phrase “green tree.” Thirteen is the number of REBELLION, and if you take the time to look up the other twelve “green tree” scriptures, you will find they in one way or another point to the sinful, rebellious nature found in all sinners. 1 SAMUEL 15:23 *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.* PROVERBS 17:11

An evil man seeketh only rebellion. Upon the cross of Calvary, ...Christ died for the ungodly... ROMANS 5:6, in other words, Christ died for the rebellious.

Concerning the rebellious nature of the children of Israel, we read this statement of Moses in DEUTERONOMY 9:24. *DEUTERONOMY 9:24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.* Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he spoke these words, and had just led the children of Israel for forty years, so he knew their state of REBELLION. One example of their rebellion is found in the following verses we are going to read from NUMBERS 21.

NUMBERS 21:4 *And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.* (This phrase “much discouraged” is only found this one time in scripture. They were “much discouraged” because of the way. Have you ever been there? They were impatient with the way God was leading them. They knew their way was better. In essence this defines REBELLION.) 5 *And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.* (Loathing this light bread, God’s provision of manna, means that they were not satisfied with God’s provision for them. This too was REBELLION.) 6 *And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.* 7 *Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.* 8 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.* 9 *And Moses made a serpent of brass, (brass speaks of judgment) and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.*

In these verses that we just read here in NUMBERS 21 we find the remedy for REBELLION. Brother Hawkins wrote a commentary on the book of NUMBERS, and this is some of what he pointed out. *“And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.”* NUMBERS 21:6. This is only an outward expression of what had happened inwardly to Israel. Spiritually speaking, they had already been injected with Satan’s venom of unbelief and rebellion, which results in death. As usual, however, God is not taken by surprise. He had the plan of redemption in mind before men even needed a Savior. Here, his mediator, Moses, is immediately on the scene, ready to pray for the people – *“we have sinned, we have spoken against the Lord and against thee; pray unto the Lord ... And Moses prayed for the people.”* NUMBERS 21:7. God’s remedy for the plight is the story of redemption. *“And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”* NUMBERS 21:8. This object lesson is a perfect portrait of 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21: *“For He hath made Him to be sin (as a serpent) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* {End of quoting Brother Hawkins for now.}

Jesus Himself referenced these same verses we just read in NUMBERS 21 as he discussed being born again with Nicodemus in JOHN 3. JOHN 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* Jesus made a reference to the cross in verse 14. Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, the Son of man, was lifted up on the cross of Calvary, suspended between heaven and earth. Jesus was likening His own hanging on the cross to Moses’ lifting up the serpent in NUMBERS 21:9. The cross is the place where Jesus was “lifted up” suspended between heaven and earth, no man’s land, where He was made *...to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him...* as is noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 referenced above. Those in Moses day who looked upon the fiery serpent

received by faith a remedy for their snakebite, and did not die. The sinner who looks by faith to Christ, who was "lifted up" suspended between heaven and earth on the cross of Calvary, and who died there being made sin for us, receives salvation from sin ...*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Continuing with this thought of Jesus being "lifted up" on the cross, go to JOHN 8 for a moment. In JOHN 8:12-59 Jesus give His discourse on He being the Light of the world, and the Light of life. In JOHN 8:28 we read: *Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.* In JOHN 12 a few short days before His death upon the cross Jesus continued this teaching, saying in JOHN 12:31 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.* We know Jesus died upon the cross a short while later. JOHN 12:34 *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.