

BENJAMIN'S PORTION FIVE-FOLD

– *MAY 25.* – *GENESIS 43.* –

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." – I John 2:10.

WHEN the wheat supply procured from Egypt began to run low, Jacob urged his sons to go again for more. But they positively refused to do so unless their younger brother, Benjamin, should go along. Then one of the brethren – Judah – became surety for Benjamin. Jacob finally consented, sending with them a present of honey, spices, etc., and double money, and Benjamin, saying, "And God Almighty give you mercy before the man [Joseph], that he may send away your other brother, Simeon, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Again they were expected by Joseph, who this time gave instructions that a dinner should be served for them in his presence. They were in fear, however, especially because the money had been put into the mouths of their sacks at their former visit. They communed with Joseph's steward at the door of the house and got his answer – so different from what they would probably get today in Egypt, or anywhere else. He said, "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them." Then he gave them water, wherewith to wash and refresh themselves, and provender for their asses, and made ready for the noon repast.

Then Joseph came in, robed as an Egyptian prince. They bowed themselves to the earth, and tendered him the present. Tenderly he inquired for their father, and then in respect to Benjamin, their younger brother. So deep was his emotion that he was obliged to retire for a time to shed tears of joy. Restraining himself, he returned, and the meal proceeded. From his own private table he caused

portions to be sent to his eleven brethren, having already directed that they should be seated according to their age and birthright. This also astonished the brethren, and much more were they astonished when they perceived that the helping given to the youngest brother was five portions instead of one – a mark of special favor.

The story is very simple, very touching, very beautiful, both for children and for those of mature mind. The setting is so natural as to carry with it the conviction of truth, so guileless as to be fully in harmony with what might be expected in the Book of God.

THE SPIRITUAL LESSON TAUGHT

Bible Students, realizing that Joseph was a type of The Messiah, are of the opinion that Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother by the same mother, was also a type. As Abraham's wives were typical of different covenants, so Bible Students seem to see that Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, typified a special covenant – the Covenant of Sacrifice, which has operated during this Gospel Age, and which brings forth two distinctly separate classes of saints. These two classes of saints seem to be typified by Joseph and Benjamin.

The highest class is represented in Joseph – The Messiah – the class that includes the specially faithful of God's people during this Gospel Age – Jesus and all of His footstep followers. This class, eventually, as typified by Joseph, will reach the Throne of empire, becoming the King or Ruler of the universe, next to the Almighty Creator, typified by Pharaoh, who took Joseph out of the prison-house of death and highly exalted him to be next to himself in power and great glory.

It has evidently escaped the attention of many Bible Students, until recently, that two classes of saintly Christians are being developed during this Gospel Age – a superior class, represented by Joseph, and an inferior class, represented by Benjamin. The word

Benjamin signifies "son of my right hand." The name Benoni – "son of my pain" – was given to him by his mother, who died in giving him birth.

The antitypical lesson here would be that this special Covenant, typified by Rachel, gives birth to the elect Church, The Messiah, of which Jesus is the Head, and will also give birth to another class, and then cease – expire – giving birth to no more. The secondary class are Scripturally designated as tribulation saints, the declaration being made that they shall "come up out of great tribulation" to the blessing which they will inherit. Moreover, this class is represented as being much more numerous than the still more honored class, typified by Joseph.

"LITTLE FLOCK" – "GREAT COMPANY"

In order to present this view clearly, we must refer to Revelation, 7th chapter. There we are given the picture of 144,000, sealed in their foreheads. These are the same that are elsewhere represented as standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, and singing the song which none but themselves could learn to sing. (Revelation 14:1-3.) Again, these are represented as being with the Lamb, standing upon the sea of glass. (Revelation 15:2,3.) Thus in various ways this group seems to represent the Very Elect, the saintly few, the Little Flock, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the Millennial Kingdom, as joint-heirs with their Lord and Redeemer.

In Revelation 7:4, we read that these are from the twelve tribes of Israel – 12,000 from each tribe. This is understood by Bible Students to signify that God originally arranged for the full number of the Elect to be taken from Natural Israel, as though He did not know that Natural Israel would reject the Lord and crucify Him. The Plan was laid out on the Israelitish basis, even though God knew in advance that Israel would not obtain that which he sought (the chief blessing), but that the Election would obtain it, and the remainder of

that nation would be temporarily blinded, until the completion of the gathering of the Elect. – Romans 11:7,25-33.

Although many of the Israelites were dispersed amongst the surrounding nations, it is evident from the Scriptural records that the entire nation – every tribe – was represented in Palestine after the return from Babylonian captivity. Thus, Jesus referred to His work as being for the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Apostles did also. As a matter of fact, the saintly ones of the Jews who heard the call, and who responded, and who were begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who thus became Spiritual Israelites and sons of God – were from all the various tribes, of some more and of some less. These constituted so many of the foreordained 144,000.

But there were not enough of the saintly ones to complete the Election. Hence by Divine favor the Message was carried to the Gentiles, Cornelius being the first Gentile convert. During the intervening centuries, the Gentiles who have responded to God's call have been accepted and begotten of the Holy Spirit, have been reckoned in as Israelites indeed, as spiritual members of the Seed of Abraham, as heirs, together with the elect Jews, to the First Resurrection, according to God's Promise made to **[R5232 : page 137]** Abraham – Natural Israel being still heir to God's secondary promises.

Thus the sealing of the Elect has been in progress for nearly nineteen centuries. Altogether, gathered from Jews and Gentiles, there will be 144,000 kings and priests unto God, followers of the Lamb, and His joint-heirs in the Kingdom. The filling up of these assignments of 12,000 each to the twelve tribes we may understand to be accomplished in the same way that British regiments of soldiers in India are recruited. The enlistments are made all over Great Britain, but the enlisted man – no matter from what city or country he be – may be assigned to membership in whatever regiment is deficient in numbers.

"AFTER THESE THINGS I BEHELD"

After the account of the sealing of the 144,000 of the Very Elect, in the same chapter we have an account of the Great Company. We read, "I beheld, and lo, a great company, whose number no man knoweth [unlike the Little Flock, these were not predestinated, or foreordained, as to number], of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb."

It should be noticed that the promise to the elect kings and priests is that their blessing will be not *before* the Throne, but *in* the Throne. Moreover, their victory will not be shown by palm branches, but by crowns of glory. All these circumstances attest that this Great Company before the Throne and with palm branches are a wholly different company from the Elect, the Bride, who will share Messiah's Throne and glory. This Great Company is elsewhere referred to symbolically as the "virgins," the Bride's companions, who will follow her. They will enter into the palace with her, into the presence of the great King, but they will not be the Bride. – Psalm 45:14,15.

This Great Company was explained to the Revelator, and the explanation is for us. We read, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple; and He that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them."

Bible Students notice that the Little Flock class are styled "the Temple of God," "living stones," whereas this Great Company will serve God in that Temple – in and through the Church. They also notice that this class who will wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb during a great time of trouble, must of

necessity be a different class from the Bride, who are described as watching and keeping their garments unspotted from the world – that they may be without spot and without wrinkle in the presence of the King.

TWO TRIBULATION CLASSES

The Little Flock, the Royal Priesthood, the Elect Church, of which Christ is the Head, will indeed pass through tribulations. So it is written, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the Kingdom." Indeed we know that the Lord Himself passed through great tribulation, shame, suffering and death. We know the same also of His footstep followers, the Apostles and others.

Nevertheless, these are not described in the Bible as the Tribulation Class, because, by virtue of their greater faith, these are able to rejoice in their tribulations and to count them all joy, knowing that these are working out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. These pass through the tribulations joyfully, because they consider the things that are seen as temporal. They look with the eye of faith to the things not seen, to the things eternal, which God hath in reservation for them that love Him.

The Tribulation Saints are variously pictured in the Scriptures as those who lack in the amount of their zeal, but who do not lack in their loyalty. The Tribulation Saints fail to go on and fulfil their vows of sacrifice, and to be heroes in the fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. As the Scriptures say, "Through fear of death they are all their lifetime subject to bondage" – bondage to the flesh, bondage to the customs of society – fearful of the sacrificing experiences which they covenanted should be theirs. – Hebrews 2:15.

For this reason, they cannot be accepted of the Lord as copies of His dear Son, and as worthy of sharing in His glory, honor and immortality. Nevertheless, the Lord is very compassionate, and tests

them as to their loyalty to Him. As many as ultimately prove faithful, loyal, He proposes shall be granted everlasting life, even though they fail of joint-heirship in the Kingdom, the very thing to which they were invited. As it is written, "Ye are all called in the one hope of your calling." – Ephesians 4:4.

Undoubtedly, there have been some of this class developed all the way down through the Gospel Age, but the Scriptures picture this class especially in connection with the tribulation coming on the world in the close of this Age. Take for instance, the statement that they should come up out of great tribulation, also St. Paul's statement that "that Day shall try every man's work of what sort it is." They that builded with gold, silver and precious stones, he declares will stand the test. The fire of that Day will not cause them tribulation – will not destroy their faith structure. Then he describes the Great Company class, saying that others have built improperly with wood, hay and stubble, and that the fire of that Day shall completely destroy all such improper structures. He declares, nevertheless, that if they builded, even improperly upon the true Foundation, they shall be saved, so as by fire – saved in the time of trouble, coming up to God's favor through great tribulation, and sharers in a goodly resurrection, although not participants in the First Resurrection. For of it we read, "Blessed and holy are all those who have part in the First [chief] Resurrection; on such the Second Death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years." – Revelation 20:6.

BENJAMIN'S FIVE PORTIONS

In dispensing his bounties, Joseph gave abundantly to all of his brethren. But to Benjamin, his full brother, of the same mother, he gave five portions. To Bible Students it appears that, since Joseph clearly typifies The Messiah and His kingly power and glory, the blessings distributed to his brethren represent favors that Messiah will bestow upon Natural Israel, His brethren according to the flesh,

in addition to the general blessing which His Messianic reign will give to the whole world, represented in the Egyptians.

According to this picture Benjamin, the son of pain, would represent the Great Company class of the Lord's people, who will come up out of great tribulation to a higher plane, to a higher condition, to a higher blessing, than the remainder of the world. They, begotten of the Holy Spirit like the Church, will also be spirit beings, if found worthy of life. And their brethren, who sold the antitypical Joseph, will nevertheless be greatly blessed by Him.

