

NEW TESTAMENT
READINGS &
DEVOTIONALS

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VOLUME 3

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C.M.H. Koenig Books

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Reading: Acts 27

“The rest were to follow, some on planks and some on debris from the ship. In this way, everyone safely reached the shore.” Acts 27:44

This is a beautiful conclusion of a history, which, during the providence wherein Paul the apostle and his companions were in shipwreck, afforded a large opportunity for the exercise of faith. The issue, it appears, was not doubtful from the first: for an angel of God had assured Paul, that God had given unto him the lives of all that sailed with him. And so it proved; yea, the very wreck of the ship furnished out means for the people’s safety. Now, my soul, here is a very precious instruction for thee. In the exercises of thy life, learn from hence to abide firmly by the promise, when everything leading to its accomplishment seems to fail. God hath said, that eternal life with all its preliminaries, is in his Son; and that he that hath the Son, hath life, and shall not come into condemnation.¹ Now let what will arise, after this declaration of God, like the storm and shipwreck of the apostle, these are intervening circumstances with which thou hast nothing to do. Do thou take hold of the promise; for the promise hath its claim upon God. This cannot fail, whatever else may fail. And, though, like Paul in this voyage, “neither sun nor stars in many days may appear,” and no small tempest be upon thee, Jesus is still at the helm, and thou shalt assuredly

escape to land. Yea, the very wreck of all things around thee, shall but the better minister to this great end. And thou shalt at length write down the same conclusion to thy history, which Joshua, the man of God, made of the whole history of Israel: "Not one thing hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass, unto this very day."² (Hawker, The Poor Man's Evening Portion, Feb 25)

Footnotes:

1. John 3:15; Romans 8:1.
2. Joshua 23:14.

2

Reading: Acts 28

“Now the brothers and sisters from there had heard the news about us and had come to meet us as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.” Acts 28:15

We have here the Apostle brought to his journey's end. And thus the Lord's promise was made good. How welcome *Paul* was to the disciples at *Rome*, may be inferred from many of them coming so far to meet him. *Appii forum* could hardly be less than *fifty* miles, and the three taverns, not less than *thirty*. Surely the Lord sent them, and *Paul* considered it so, for he found increasing confidence from the sight of them. And thus the Lord frequently strengthens the hands and hearts of his people, in their mutual love and sympathy with each other, and all in Him. (Hawker, Poor Man's New Testament Commentary: Acts-Ephesians, 230)

3

Reading: Philemon 1

“... the church that meets in your home.” Philemon 2

Is there a Church in this house? Are parents, children, friends, servants, all members of it? or are some still unconverted? Let us pause here and let the question go round – *Am I a member of the Church in this house?* How would father’s heart leap for joy, and mother’s eyes fill with holy tears if from the eldest to the youngest all were saved! Let us pray for this great mercy until the Lord shall grant it to us. Probably it had been the dearest object of Philemon’s desires to have all his household saved; but it was not at first granted him in its fulness. He had a wicked servant, Onesimus, who, having wronged him, ran away from his service. His master’s prayers followed him, and at last, as God would have it, Onesimus was led to hear Paul preach; his heart was touched, and he returned to Philemon, not only to be a faithful servant, but a brother beloved, adding another member to the Church in Philemon’s house. Is there an unconverted servant or child absent this morning? Make special supplication that such may, on their return to their home, gladden all hearts with good news of what grace has done! Is there one present? Let him partake in the same earnest entreaty.

If there be such a Church in our house, let us order it well, and let all act as in the sight of God. Let us move in the common affairs of life with studied holiness, diligence, kindness, and integrity. More is expected of a Church than of an ordinary household; family worship must, in such a case, be more devout and hearty; internal love must be more warm and unbroken, and external conduct must be more sanctified and Christlike. We need not fear that the smallness of our number will put us out of the list of Churches, for the Holy Spirit has here enrolled a family-church in the inspired book of remembrance. As a Church let us now draw nigh to the great head of the one Church universal, and let us beseech him to give us grace to shine before men to the glory of his name. (Spurgeon, Morning Nov 1)

4

Reading: Colossians 1

“The hope which is laid up for you in heaven.” Colossians 1:5 (AKJV)

Our hope in Christ for the future is the mainspring and the mainstay of our joy here. It will animate our hearts to think often of heaven, for all that we can desire is promised there. Here we are weary and toil worn, but yonder is the land of rest where the sweat of labor shall no more bedew the worker’s brow, and fatigue shall be forever banished. To those who are weary and spent, the word “rest” is full of heaven. We are always in the field of battle; we are so tempted within, and so molested by foes without, that we have little or no peace; but in heaven we shall enjoy the *victory*, when the banner shall be waved aloft in triumph, and the sword shall be sheathed, and we shall hear our Captain say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”¹ We have suffered bereavement after bereavement, but we are going to the land of the *immortal* where graves are unknown things. Here sin is a constant grief to us, but there we shall be perfectly *holy*, for there shall by no means enter into that kingdom anything which defileth.² Hemlock springs not up in the furrows of celestial fields. Oh! is it not joy, that you are not to be in banishment forever, that you are not to dwell eternally in this wilderness, but shall soon inherit Canaan? Nevertheless, let it never be said of us,

that we are dreaming about the *future* and forgetting the *present*, let the future sanctify the present to highest uses. Through the Spirit of God, the hope of heaven is the most potent force for the product of virtue; it is a fountain of joyous effort, it is the corner stone of cheerful holiness. The man who has this hope in him goes about his work with vigor, for the joy of the Lord is his strength. He fights against temptation with ardor, for the hope of the next world repels the fiery darts of the adversary. He can labor without present reward, for he looks for a reward in the world to come. (Spurgeon, Oct 2)

Footnotes:

1. Matthew 25:20-22; Luke 19:17.
2. Revelation 21:4.

Reading: Colossians 2

“In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:9-10 (AKJV)

All the attributes of Christ, as God and man, are at our disposal. All the fulness of the Godhead, whatever that marvelous term may comprehend, is ours to make us complete. He cannot endow us with the attributes of Deity; but he has done all that can be done, for he has made even his divine power and Godhead subservient to our salvation. His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immutability and infallibility, are all combined for our defense. Arise, believer, and behold the Lord Jesus yoking the whole of his divine Godhead to the chariot of salvation! How vast his grace, how firm his faithfulness, how unswerving his immutability, how infinite his power, how limitless his knowledge! All these are by the Lord Jesus made the pillars of the temple of salvation; and all, without diminution of their infinity, are covenanted to us as our perpetual inheritance. The fathomless love of the Savior’s heart is every drop of it ours; every sinew in the arm of might, every jewel in the crown of majesty, the immensity of divine knowledge, and the sternness of divine justice, all are ours, and shall be employed for us. The whole of Christ, in his adorable character as the Son of God, is by himself made over to us most richly to enjoy. His wisdom is our direction,

his knowledge our instruction, his power our protection, his justice our surety, his love our comfort, his mercy our solace, and his immutability our trust. He makes no reserve, but opens the recesses of the Mount of God and bids us dig in its mines for the hidden treasures. "All, all, all are yours," saith he, "be ye satisfied with favor and full of the goodness of the Lord." Oh! how sweet thus to behold Jesus, and to call upon him with the certain confidence that in seeking the interposition of his love or power, we are but asking for that which he has already faithfully promised. (Spurgeon, Morning May 18)