

Articles by George Ferrier

George Ferrier

All material used by permission of the author, as published on
plymouthbrethren.org.

Also online at <https://plymouthbrethren.org/author/860>

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

Poured Out to God

The drink offering, normally offered with the meal and burnt offerings, was celebrated by completely pouring out a quantity of wine at the base of the altar. None of it was to be consumed. Wine is symbolic of joy, Judg. 9. 13, and the act of pouring it out signified a deep sense of worship and thanksgiving. When the Lord judged Israel for their idolatry He rebuked them for pouring out their drink offerings to foreign gods, Jer. 7. 18. On the other hand, it was always a time of joy when poured out to God.

Jacob and Bethel - the joy of intimacy

The first mention of the drink offering is on Jacob's return to Bethel. Fleeing from his brother, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, Gen. 28. 17, and Jacob named the place 'Bethel', house of God. Twenty years later, obeying the Lord, Jacob returned to Bethel and built an altar, Gen. 35. 7. He named the place 'El Bethel', the God of Bethel, demonstrating that he had come to know the God of Bethel both through experience and direct revelation, Gen. 31. 13. He now appreciated the Person more than the place. Later, after a time of close fellowship with the Lord, Jacob poured a drink offering onto a stone followed by some oil, Gen. 35. 14.

In this incident Jacob teaches us the joy of intimacy.

Jacob knew God in a more intimate way than before and this resulted in worship. If we are to effectively serve the Lord, we must be worshippers, and to properly worship Him we must know Him. Seeing Christ's holiness and his own sinfulness led Isaiah to worship

and cry out, 'send me', Isa. 6. 8. The appearance of the risen glorified Lord on the way to Damascus turned Paul from an enemy of Christ into a worshipper. Only then was he ready to ask 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9. 6. Seeing the Lord work in our lives through our experiences, and through an increased understanding of God's word, will give us a greater appreciation of His person. This will create a desire within us to worship Him, and when we do so under the Holy Spirit's direction, it brings immense joy to the Father. It will also bring joy to our own hearts and we will want to serve Him.

David in Adullam - the joy of surrender, answered prayer and giving Another time we see the drink offering poured out is while David was dwelling at the cave in Adullam, 2 Sam. 23. 13- 17. One day he expressed a longing for a drink from the well at Bethlehem. From his days as a shepherd, he remembered how refreshing this water could taste. Even though there was a Philistine garrison stationed there, three of his men broke through and brought him back some of the water from the well. David was so overwhelmed by this act of devotion that he poured it out to the Lord.

These men demonstrate to us the joy of surrender. They were so devoted to David as a person and a king, they were willing to fulfill his heart's longing. Are we similarly willing to fulfill the deepest desires of our Lord? For example He wants us to live holy lives, 1 Pet. 1. 16; love the brethren, John 13. 34-35; and forgive, Eph. 4. 32. He yearns for us to take the living water to the thirsty, Matt. 28. 19-20. He also has specific desires for each one of us and is longing to reveal them. Will we allow Him and are we willing to obey? Today it is

common for believers to talk about their needs being met. Responding to the things that are tugging at the heart of God is a more appropriate occupation.

David's reaction illustrates the joy of answered prayer. Often we present our requests to the Lord and when they are answered we go on to our next request. We should cultivate an attitude of joyful thanksgiving as we witness His response. Let us joyfully pour ourselves out in worship to Him the next time He answers our prayer.

David also displayed the joy of giving. The burnt offering was an act of surrender and devotion, and it included a drink offering. David recognized the virtue of these men's sacrifice as a burnt offering to God, and felt it was fitting that he pour out his drink offering at the base of this great sacrifice. Knowing that God loves a cheerful giver, 2 Cor. 9. 7, what do we do with our valuable assets? Do we constantly fall into idolatry like the Israelites, or do we pour our belongings out to God at the base of His great sacrifice for us?

The Lord Jesus in life - the joy of obedience

The

Lord Jesus personified the drink offering more than any other. The prophet Isaiah said the Lord poured out His soul unto death, Isa. 53. 12. His blood was shed for us, Luke 22. 20. He was poured out like water, Ps. 22. 14, and He emptied Himself, Phil. 2. 7-8. The soldier pierced Him and out came blood and water, John 19. 34. The Lord Jesus demonstrated the joy of obedience in a way no other person ever could. It was not only a future joy awaiting Him in His glory, Heb. 12. 2, but it was a present joy in His suffering. He learned obedience by His suffering, Heb. 5. 8, and He delighted to do the

Father's will, Ps. 40. 8. In spite of the cruelty to which He was subjected, He knew that His offering was being accepted and that it would bring redemption to those who were His. He was God's drink offering. Knowing this, He refused the wine offered to Him on the cross, Mark 15. 23. The drink offering was not to be consumed but to be poured out. We will experience the deepest joy in difficult times if we are in His will. It will give meaning to our circumstances and cause us to thank God for the hour He has given us. Like Christ we can have joy in our suffering as we obey Him, and wait for our future joy in glory, Rom. 8. 18.

Paul's approaching death - the joy in sacrifice

The apostle Paul viewed his approaching martyrdom as a drink offering to God. It was to be his joy in sacrifice and in doing so he anticipated the joy of His appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 6-8. He longed to be with his Saviour, Phil. 1. 23, and knew there was a crown awaiting him and all those who love His appearing. He was looking forward to that meeting, because he had fought hard and run the race well. Looking back on our lives, can we similarly look forward to His appearing with confidence and joy?

God's drink offering

What makes the heart of God sing? It is His people. After instituting the Lord's Supper the Lord Jesus sang a hymn, Mark 14. 26. There was joy, as He thought about His obedience leading to the redemption of His own. He sings to the Father amidst those whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren, Heb. 2. 11-12. He will sing when Israel is restored to fellowship with Him, Zeph. 3. 17. He longs for the day when we will be with Him in glory, John 14. 3; 17. 24. As we look forward to the

Lord's return, let us daily pour out our drink offerings to Him, and we will experience the many joys that the God of Bethel can bring.

The Eternal Son Declared in Time

The Lord Jesus has many names and titles but concerning His person He is the unchanging Son of God (Heb 13:8).

His Sonship Established

First, His Sonship is revealed through His eternal relationship with the other members of the Trinity. The Father and Son are mentioned in the Old Testament (Ps. 2:7; Prov. 30:4) as well as the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2). Furthermore the Godhead has a relationship among them that has no reference to time (Gen 1:1; John 1:1).

Secondly, our eternal God designed the church through His infinite wisdom. It was an eternal plan (Eph 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2) which involved all members of the Godhead (Matt 3:16-17; John 3:16, 34).

Thirdly, He was the sent One (John 3:16; Gal 4:4). Isaiah states that a child was born yet a Son was given (Isaiah 9:6). Concerning Christ's humanity He was a child born into the world but regarding His deity He was eternally a Son when He was given.

Fourthly, a son has an honor and authority that a servant will never have (Heb 3:1-6). Being a Son does not imply submission or inferiority (John 5:17-18). Yet when Christ came into this world He learned obedience by the things He suffered (Heb 5:8). It was a new experience for Him and was related to becoming man.

Finally, there is an order and priority suggested in Hebrews 1:2 which says that He is Son, heir and creator. All things were created through the Son and for the Son

(Col 1:16). His creative work took place in time but His Sonship is rooted in eternity.

His Sonship Declared

In the Psalms Christ reveals a declaration the Father made to Him.

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." (Psalms 2:7)

In scripture the word beget normally refers to birth and suggests manifesting or bringing someone forth. It can also be used for the new birth (Phile. 1:10; 1 John 5:1). In another passage the psalmist compares the mother's womb to the lowest parts of the earth (Psalms 139:15).

In Romans 1:3-4 we read,

"Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

The eternally begotten One (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9), was also begotten from the womb during His incarnation (Rom 1:3) and from the earth during His resurrection (Rom 1:4).

However it was on resurrection day that the Lord Jesus was powerfully revealed to be the Son of God and His Father gladly proclaimed it.

His Sonship Manifested

This declaration is repeated three times in the New Testament and reveals the Son in three positions.

The Prophet Manifested as the Son of God

"And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts 13:32-33)

A prophet represented God to man and a genuine one could be recognized (Deut 18:22). There was no prophet in Israel like Moses (Deut 34:10) yet one like Moses was promised (Deut 18:18; John 5:46). The Lord Jesus would distinguish Himself as the greatest prophet because He would speak the very words of God (John 3:34).

When the Jewish leaders asked the Lord for a sign they were promised only one - His resurrection. (Matt 12:40; John 2:19).

The idea of a suffering Messiah was a stumbling-block to the Jews (1 Cor 1:23). Consequently when they saw the Lord Jesus hanging on the cross they believed he was forever a cursed impostor (Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13).

Conversely the Gentiles considered the idea of a god dying for his people foolish (1 Cor 1:23).

Yet God revealed His wisdom and power (1 Cor 2:5) by resurrecting Christ and showing believers that Christ is the wisdom and power of God (1 Cor 1:24).

On that day God declared that the greatest prophet is the eternal Son of God.

The Priest Manifested as the Son of God

"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to

day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb 5:5-6)

A priest represented man to God and according to the law he had to be from the tribe of Levi. The Lord Jesus was born into the tribe of Judah so legally He did not qualify. Consequently the One who fulfilled all righteousness did not act in the capacity of priest before the cross (Heb 7:13-14).

However the priesthood, sacrifices and feasts in the Old Testament were pictures that pointed to Christ. When He died on the cross He was both priest and offering and revealed the truth shown in these types. He was the last High Priest and the final offering and His sacrifice ended the Aaronic priesthood (Heb 7:27; 10:12).

The Lord's priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek is based on His finished work (Psalms 110:4; 1 John 2:1-2) and was proved acceptable by His resurrection.

Melchizedek was the priest-king of Salem who brought bread and wine when he met Abram (Gen 14:18). He was a type of the Lord Jesus not only because he was a priest-king, but also in that there was no record of his genealogy (Heb 7:1-3).

He received tithes from Abraham and blessed him (Gen 14:19-20) proving that His priesthood was greater than the one that would come from Abraham's offspring - Levi (Heb 7:5-10).

The Lord Jesus is the sinless high priest (Heb 7:26) that was appointed by God (Heb 7:20-21). His priesthood replaced Aaron's (Heb 7:11-12) and continues forever (Heb 7:24).

He ensures our salvation (Heb 7:25; Jude 24), makes our worship acceptable to the Father (Heb 2:12; 1 Peter 2:5), prays for us (John 17), defends us against the accuser (Rom 8:33-34) and is our advocate (1 John 2:1-2). In all these things He is our mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and intercessor (Heb 7:25).

On that day God declared that our great High Priest is the eternal Son of God.

The King Manifested as the Son of God

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb 1:5)

This refers to the promise made to David known as the Davidic covenant which unconditionally promised that his throne and kingdom would last forever (2 Sam 7:14-16; Ps 89:26-29).

The Son of David (Rom 1:3) is the promised King and someday will fill that vacant seat and rule forever (Dan 2:34-35; 7:27; Luke 1:32-33).

When He came into the world the first time the Lord Jesus presented His credentials to the nation of Israel. Incredibly, they concluded that He didn't meet their qualifications and rejected Him as their king (John 19:15).

God had a different view. He brought Him forth in resurrection so that He could highly exalt Him (Phil 2:9-11) and after His ascension He authenticated Christ's kingship by seating Him at His right hand. He is now waiting until it is time to come back and take the

throne that is rightfully His (Psalms 2:8; 110:1; Rev 11:15).

It was forbidden under the law for someone to act as priest and king. King Uzziah came under immediate judgment for entering into the temple and officiating as a priest (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). Someday there will be a Priest-King on the throne (Zech 6:12-13) and He will be there with God's full approval.

On that day God declared that the King of Kings is the eternal Son of God.

Hear Him

We sense the Father's joy as He manifested the greatest prophet, our great High Priest and the King of Kings to be His eternal Son. As we hear Him proclaim it may it fill our hearts with worship.

The House of God

A unique relationship we have with Christ is that we are His house and God permanently lives in us by the indwelling of His Spirit, Eph. 2.22. In light of this let's consider some of the characteristics of His house.

1. Its Foundation (Who do you say that I am? Matt. 16.15)

The Lord Jesus once asked His disciples this personal question, Matt. 16.15. Through a revelation of the Father Peter answered that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, Matt. 16.16. The Lord responded by saying that He would build His church upon this rock. The rock is the Lord Jesus and through His infinite wisdom He continues to build his church upon this confession, 1 Cor. 3.11, 1 John 5.5.

The truth about Christ's person is foundational, has eternal consequences and must be emphasized in our teaching and gospel work. He is the church's foundation, was built upon by the apostles and every believer has since been added as a stone to the spiritual house, 1 Pet. 2.5, God is constructing, Eph. 2.19-22.

2. Its Atmosphere (Where are you staying? John 1.38)

We might raise the question, "where does God like to dwell?" Isaiah declares that the high and lofty one, who inhabits eternity, also delights to dwell with the humble and contrite, Isa. 57.15.

The devil's heart was filled with pride and he was cast out of heaven. Similarly, Adam and Eve wanted to be like God, Gen. 3.5, and they were cast out of Eden. Yet our

holy God will inhabit any sinner who comes to Him in repentance and faith, Acts 20.21, Jas. 4.6.

The centurion asked the Lord to heal his servant through His word because he recognized that he was not worthy to have the Lord enter his house, Luke 7.6-7.

We must also remember our unworthiness and that it is only by His grace He entered our house. Considering our low estate an air of humility should permeate the house of God, Phil. 2.1-5.

3. Its Authority (By what authority are you doing these things? Luke 20.2)

After cleansing the temple the Lord's authority was questioned by the Pharisees. Their objection was answered later when Christ asked them about His Sonship, Matt. 22.42. Indeed He was the son of David in his humanity nevertheless David called Him Lord because He was God, Matt. 22.43-45.

In the Jewish home a son had an authority and inheritance that a servant could never have. Christ's authority is rooted in the reality that He is the Son of God. Moses was a faithful servant in Israel's house however Christ was a faithful Son over His house, Heb. 3.5-6.

The Lord Jesus mentioned that all authority was granted to Him in heaven and earth, Matt. 28.18. Through His death and resurrection He has the authority to declare repenting sinners clean without violating His holiness, Rom. 3.25-26. He is head of the church, Eph. 2.22, and has left instructions for it regarding its pattern and order, 1 Cor. 2.9-10, 1 Cor. 11.23.

Christ has delegated to us the task of proclaiming His authority. In the same way He cleansed the temple before teaching in it, Luke 19.45-48, we witness about the One who cleanses, Matt. 28.19, and then teach those newly cleansed temples, Matt. 28.20.

Furthermore, we are sons of God, John 1.12, joint-heirs, Rom. 8.17, and will reign with Him, Rev. 20.6.

4. Its Satisfaction (Is the Lord among us or not? Exod. 17.6-7)

During a time of great thirst the Israelites questioned the presence of God. The Lord answered them in an astonishing way by instructing Moses to strike a rock resulting in an abundance of water. We know from 1 Corinthians 10.4, that this Rock symbolized the once smitten Christ.

The Lord told the woman at the well that she would never thirst again if she drank of His water, John 4.13-14. The water speaks of the Holy Spirit who has been given to all believers, John 3.5.

Today many are searching for fulfillment but are left with an unsatisfied thirst. However the believer who has found his satisfaction in Christ, Ps. 42.1, will also be a blessing to others, John 7.37-39.

His presence brings satisfaction in all circumstances, Heb. 13.5, and it's what makes the house a home, John 14.23. Likewise a restored Israel will someday know the truth "THE LORD IS THERE", Ezek. 48.35.

It's a comfort knowing the Lord is present when we are enduring trials and need His guidance. We must guard against discontentment, Phil. 4.11, and serve Him

knowing that He is walking among us even when times appear barren.

5. Its Glory (Can anything good come out of Nazareth? John 1.46)

We know there is no righteousness, Isa. 64.6, in us and it was by His grace He revealed His goodness to us. He deserves all glory because the one who builds the house has more honor than the house, Heb. 3.3.

When God's glory filled the temple the Israelites worshipped and praised Him, 2 Chr. 7.2-3, moreover nothing was able to enter into it. In a like manner, no other desires will fill us when we are captivated by His glory and allow it to be displayed in our lives.

God is building Himself an exalted house to dwell in forever, 2 Chr. 6.2. In view of this, the church's purpose in all our activities is to bring glory to Him, Matt. 5.16, 1 Cor. 10.31. The house's exaltation originates from God's presence and is magnificent, 1 Chr. 22.5, when it reflects the Lord's glory, 2 Cor. 3.18.

6. Its Chief Activity (Which of them will love Him more? Luke 7.42)

God demonstrates His love for us by His grace and mercy, 1 John 4.9. In response we can demonstrate our love for Him by our worship. Indeed, God desires worshippers, John 4.23, and worship must be the chief activity in the church.

When Simon the Pharisee criticized the Lord for accepting a woman's costly worship Christ asked this question about two forgiven debtors, one who owed much and one who owed little.

Since we recognize that God has richly forgiven us we must ask this question, "Which of us will love the Lord more?" We have the opportunity to worship Him with our praise, Heb. 13.15, money, Rom. 15.26, possessions, Heb 13.16, and time, Eph. 5.16. Yet the one who offers up their whole life to Him demonstrates the higher love, Rom. 12.1. When we do so He reveals His will to us so that we can astutely worship Him, Rom. 12.2.

7. Its Approval (Where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? John 8.9-10)

After watching all her accusers leave the adulterous woman heard the Lord utter these marvelous words, "neither do I condemn you; go sin no more." All believers in happy fellowship should feel at home regardless of what we were preceding our salvation. God's house is a place of approval because we have been clothed with Christ's perfect righteousness, Rom. 5.17-21, 8.33-34.

Christ also exhorts us as He did this woman to live holy lives, 1 Pet. 1.16, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5.16. We must take this seriously since we as individuals, 1 Cor. 6.19, and as the church, 1 Cor. 3.16, are inhabited by God.

The Lord told the church at Pergamos that the overcomers would receive a white stone, Rev. 2.17. In that day a judge placed a white stone in a vessel to indicate acquittal and a black stone to reveal guilt. Likewise a host would present a white stone to a guest indicating that they were welcome.

The Lord said to Peter, "You are Simon son of Jonah; you shall be called Peter" (a stone), John 1.42. Similarly, all saints are called a stone in the house of God and the

Lord will give us a new name, Rev. 2.17, as He did to Peter. Truly, He has pardoned us and will welcome us, Acts 7.55-56, into His presence with open arms.

We are blessed partners in God's building project as we teach the person of Christ, demonstrate humility, proclaim His authority, enjoy His presence, display His glory, actively worship Him and rejoice in His approval. What's more, we gain a growing appreciation for the house that He delights to dwell in.

Vessels For Honor

When God made man in his own image, he did so in order that he could have a personal and meaningful relationship with them. No plant, animal or any other living thing has the privilege that we as humans were given with our creator. God gave us a mind because he has a mind. We have emotions because he has emotions. God gave us a will to make choices because he has a will. Adam and Eve were honorable because God made them in his image. When God looked at them he saw his reflection. As living vessels they were to bring glory to him by doing his will. Before long however that relationship was broken by sin. The image was broken and the honor was gone. This is the sin nature that we inherit from our first parents, Adam and Eve. We are in effect born as vessels of dishonor. But God in his foreknowledge already had a plan to restore man to a place of honor. He would do so by defeating the very thing that brought dishonor to man, sin and its result, death. God the Son came to earth as a man, but remained God. This man the Lord Jesus Christ, died for our sins, taking our penalty, and rose again, providing a way for us to have our relationship with God restored. In doing this, he defeated sin and death. The Bible says that God is making into vessels for honor any that trusts in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Their destiny, now and forever, is to be objects of his mercy. On the other hand, any that rejects his Son; he makes into vessels for dishonor. They are destined to become objects of his wrath. (Rom 9:21-24; 1 John 5:11-13; John 3:18,36)

Even though as believers our relationship to God has been restored, we still battle our sin nature. But God is gradually conforming us into the image of his Son. Some day when we go to be with him, we will be perfectly sanctified. We will be free from the presence of sin forever. But for the present it is God's desire that all his vessels for honor be moving towards this sanctification in practice. That means to live holy lives and be useful for the work he has given them to do. In other words to prove by their life that they are vessels for honor. (Rom 6:12-13; 2 Tim 2:19-21)

The Greek word Acts 9:15

God called Paul a chosen vessel to carry his name to the Gentiles, kings, and the people of Israel. He was also given the task of revealing a mystery that had been kept hidden for many generations. Namely the church and its doctrine (Col 1:26-27).

Believers have the responsibility with the help of the Lord to determine how God wants to use them. Once that is determined we are encouraged to stir up the gift that is within us (2 Tim 1:6). We are to accept God's will for us and be obedient vessels.

The second principle is that not only are we to be willing and obedient vessels; we are also to be aware of what qualifies or disqualifies a believer for service. First, there must be a deliberate choice to forsake sin and offer our members to God. While it is true we will never be perfect while on earth, a believer should be progressing in the area of holiness and sanctification. We must be willing to depart from sin in order to be ready for the master's use. (2 Tim 2:21; 1 Th 4:4; Jam 1:21; Jam 4:8) Anything less results in a defective tool, a

useless vessel. Secondly, there must be humility in the believers life. (Jam 4:10) A recognition that we are nothing more than sinners deserving God's wrath and an eternity spent in hell. Seeing God's grace in our own lives we will realize that God deserves all the credit for what we are becoming. Third, we must ask for wisdom (Jam 1:5-8). The Christian life lived in the power of the flesh is impossible. We must walk after the Spirit or we will fail (Rom 8:1, 12-14). Reading God's Word and spending time in prayer each day, will give us the spiritual food and wisdom we need to be useful vessels for him.

Finally, God has chosen the weak and foolish things of the world so that no flesh will glory in his presence (1 Cor 1:27-29). There is nothing honorable about us. The honor comes from our association with him. We are weak, he is strong. We are sinful, he is holy. Apart from him we are just useless vessels. Yet in order to show that the power comes from him, he chooses weak vessels such as us to accomplish his purposes. In doing so, our service as his vessels becomes honorable. For example he has entrusted the gospel to us (2 Cor 4:7). We bring the message to the world but it is God's power that saves people. As vessels we are to fade into the background so people will see him. We must decrease so that he will increase.

One of the greatest joys in the believer's life is to be aware that God is using them to accomplish his purposes. What a privilege that is. One of his highest purposes is to present to his Son, his bride the church. When that happens we will have the joy of reigning with him and sharing in his honor and glory. We will be vessels of honor for the whole world to see, all because

of what he has done for us. In the meantime, God help us to be willing, obedient, qualified vessels that will bring honor and glory to him.