

what we are saying. The music of praise is, of course, important, but the words themselves are always crucial when we consider that we are voicing praise to the God of the universe, before Whom the nations are as a drop in a bucket and the small dust of the balance (Isa. 40:15). In that passage Isaiah magnifies God in this manner to encourage backsliding Israel to be aware of His greatness and might, and to return to Him with all their hearts.

We recall that Jesus condemned the religious rulers of his day for having hearts that did not match their lips, and he quoted from Isaiah's words in Isaiah 29:13: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Mt. 15:8). With the Lord's teaching under the New Covenant to help us, we must aim for better than Israel achieved, and Psalm 34 shows us the way. To magnify the Lord and to exalt His Name

is to do what David said of himself in an earlier Messianic psalm: "I have set the LORD always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (16:8).

Sharing our appreciation of God

Through human weakness David did not always achieve that, but his greater son, the Lord Jesus, never failed to do so. To him God was always great, besides being a most dear and cherished Father. Thus from time to time we must shut out the noise of the world, and learn to balance the greatness of our God with His closeness. While acknowledging Him as ultimately beyond our comprehension, we own Him as a loving Father Who is always nigh unto those who diligently seek Him. Then, like David, in verse 2 of the psalm, we may feel constrained to encourage others to do likewise: "My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad".

Exposition

"Behold the man!"

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

18. Our pattern

Greg Palmer

IN THIS ARTICLE we focus on how Jesus Christ was an example for us to follow. In his words and his deeds he demonstrated the life that we should lead. It was always intended that we should model ourselves on him. Our ecclesias should be built on him. The Apostle Peter puts it this way: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

Author and finisher of our faith

These words are found in Hebrews 12:1,2: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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".

Jesus is here depicted as an athlete who has finished the race of faith. The word "author" is the Greek *archēgos*, as in Hebrews 2:10 ("the captain of their salvation"—see Part 17, Jan. 2010, p. 418). The word "finisher" is the Greek *teleiotēs*, which means 'complete' or 'perfect'. From it we get the scientific prefix *telo-* used to describe the final completion of a process. It is unusual in our experience for somebody to pioneer and completely perfect a thing. There can be no further developments to this work of our Lord. He has, as it were, completed the product with every possible refinement.

Jesus is not described as the author and finisher of *our* faith so much as he is the author and finisher of faith. The word 'our' does not find place in the original texts. How, then, is Jesus the author of

faith? Since the foundation of the world God has required us to look to his sacrifice (in the future for most of our history) and in faith humbly request the forgiveness of our sins. In faith we are to look for the coming of the Kingdom of God that will bring life and peace. Jesus Christ is the pivotal point of these things and so there can be no faith without him.

However, I believe that the record is saying more than that. There has never been a faith like our Lord's. Even the great men of faith in Hebrews 11 all stumbled and fell. They all showed at one point or another a lack of faith. Jesus Christ was the pioneer of complete and perfect faith. No man ever achieved it before. In that Jesus is the finisher of faith I think we are to understand several things. He continued his perfect faith through to its completion in a way that no other has done, and he is able to complete or make perfect our faith.

The picture is that of an athlete. Jesus has run a difficult course. He is the only man who has completed it. He is encouraging us to start the course and follow his example, setting aside all encumbrances and striving for the goal. Yet, for all that, he is, as it were, bringing the finishing line back towards us so that our feeble efforts do not fall short of the goal but the deficit of faith is made complete through him. We are to view Jesus as the ultimate athlete of faith, and model our efforts upon him. Our trust in Jesus will not be misplaced, for he is able to make complete our struggle and award us the prize of eternal life. What an example to follow! Let us pattern our lives on the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Master (guide)¹

This word appears three times and only in Matthew 23:8-10: "be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, Which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ". The Greek has the sense of 'guide'. When undertaking a difficult journey in unknown territory we would seldom be so foolish as to be without a guide. Our lives are such a journey. Jesus is the best and most qualified guide there

"Ye call me Master and Lord. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet." We cannot minister until we have been ministered unto by our Lord: but when we have received his ministry ours becomes imperative: the love that has poured forth from him into our lives is too great to remain there without flowing forth also into the lives of others" (A Life of Jesus, Melva Purkis, p. 320).

is; let us follow him, tread where he trod and so reach the Promised Land.

Rock

In the building of a house there must of necessity be a foundation upon which the construction stands. The youngest of our children can delightfully recount in song the story of the wise and foolish builders from the Sermon on the Mount. The ecclesia and our own lives are no different. They must be founded upon a rock. Jesus is described in 1 Corinthians 3:11 as a foundation, and in 10:4 as a rock. Those who believe on him will not be ashamed. Those who do not set their lives upon him will find that he is a stumbling stone and a rock of offence (Rom. 9:33). Jesus Christ himself is a wise builder, for he has set his own house (the ecclesia) upon a rock. The rock is the conviction that Jesus is the Christ (Mt. 16:16-18). There is no other foundation that can be laid for lives or ecclesias if we wish them to stand.

Chief corner stone

The ideas of this title are very similar to the preceding one. Found in Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:6, the word means to be the foundation stone of the highest corner. The Greek word is used in Isaiah 28:16 in the Septuagint, which is cited in both New Testament references. The sense is that the principal stone is laid first at the most important corner, and all subsequent stones must line up with it. The foundation cornerstone has been laid by God. The building must be "fitly framed together" around Jesus Christ, or the builder will reject it. We are being fashioned as living stones after the manner of Christ. We must take our measurements and levels from him. Jesus is the reference point for the entire building. We must fit in with him.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

-
1. There are five words translated 'master' in the AV New Testament. One was considered under the heading "Lord" (Part 8, Apr. 2009, p. 43) and the others in this section. The meaning has been placed after the word 'master' in an effort to make things simpler.