

Ebenezer

#0157

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 12, 1970

Turn in the songbook to number 13. We sang it a few moments ago, and I want to ask you about a word in that song. The first line of the second stanza, the fifth word—what is it? Ebenezer, Ebenezer. I wonder what that's talking about. We sang it a while ago:

Here I raise my Ebenezer.

Well, what do you do when you raise an Ebenezer? What is an Ebenezer, anyway?

Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I've come,
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.

Up there at the top, you'll notice that some man by the name of Robert Robinson wrote this. I wonder where he got that word, Ebenezer? Where do you suppose he got it? Do you suppose he got it out of the Bible? Maybe we can find it in the Bible.

Turn to 1 Samuel, the 7th chapter, and the 12th verse:

"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it..." 1 Samuel 7:12.

The name of what? The stone.

"...Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us"
1 Samuel 7:12.

Now, let's see. Some of you have a Bible with a margin in it. What does it say is the meaning of that word, Ebenezer? The stone of help. You see, they'd just gone through an experience of disaster, and then, in answer to prayer, God had done some wonderful things for them, and with all the people together, Samuel had brought them to God, and they had made a new commitment.

And, as they looked back over the pilgrim way, they were full of thankfulness to their heavenly Father, so Samuel got a great stone and put it in place, and he called it what? Ebenezer, the stone of help. It was a memorial so that if they passed that way a week later, a month later, a year later, somebody would say, Oh yes, that's where we had that special meeting, and God came very near. The stone was to remind them of some wonderful things that God had done.

Now, we sang it this morning:

Here I raise *my* Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I've come,
And I hope by Thy good pleasure, Safely to arrive at home.

The purpose of looking back is so that we may gather courage to look ahead. The reason for reviewing what God has done for us in the past is that we may be full of hope concerning what we know He is going to do for us in the future.

Here I raise my Ebenezer.

Now, I was interested—my wife this week was reading some things from the Spirit of Prophecy comments in the commentary, and she came across this that I'm going to read you, and she was telling me about it, and so here it is. This is the second Volume of the Commentary, page 1012:

“There are thousands of souls willing to work for the Master who have not had the privilege of hearing the truth as some have heard it, but they have been faithful readers of the Word of God, and they will be blessed in their humble efforts to impart light to others. Let such ones keep a diary, and when the Lord gives them an interesting experience, let them write it down, as Samuel did when the armies of Israel won a victory over the Philistines. He set up a monument of thankfulness, saying, ‘Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.’ ‘Brethren, where are the monuments by which you keep in view the love and goodness of God? Strive to keep fresh in your minds the help that the Lord has given you in your efforts to help others. Let not your actions show one trace of selfishness. Every tear that the Lord has helped you to wipe from sorrowful eyes, every fear that has been expelled, every mercy shown,—trace a record of it in your diary. ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be’” *SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 2*, page 1012.

Now, there's a suggestion. When God does something special for you, when He answers some prayer, when He does something for you that you didn't even know enough to pray about before it happened, write it down. Have a little book.

Now, this is not a command that if you don't do it, that's sin and you can't go to Heaven. That isn't the point. This is a suggestion that'll help some people.

Now, I have a little book. I don't know whether you'd call it a diary—it's a kind of a little appointment book. I call it my cerebrum, a part of my brain, to keep track of some things, so I don't have to be carrying it up here all the time.

But along with my appointments ahead, this little book, as I look back on it, furnishes me with a record of where I've been, and as I look back on it, I see here and there some little x's. You know what those little x's are to me? I hadn't thought of the word for them until I was reading this just now, but you know what those little x's are to me? They're Ebenezers. They're different things that, at the time they happened, impressed me very much with God's special blessing and intervention, and so I just put a little x there, I just put a little x there.

I'll have to tell you about one of them. Some of you have heard me tell this particular one, but some of you haven't. And really, it's so good I like to tell it more than once anyway.

Just a few days ago, before I went up to Michigan for a meeting, I was down at the sanitarium and, after some errands down there, I got in my car, ready to go back up the hill, and I reached in my pocket to get my keys, and lo and behold, they weren't there.

Now, I don't think I've ever lost my keys before in my life where I didn't know where they were. Oh, I've had to look around in my bureau drawer or something like that, but here I was, no keys.

Well, you know what happens to a car when you don't have the keys? You know, don't you? So I looked and looked all over, and I couldn't find them, and then I retraced my steps down to the sanitarium, the treatment room, the diet kitchen, and some other places I'd been, and, no. Then, I went all over it again and, of course, I was praying that the Lord would help me to find the keys, but, nope, no keys.

So, one of the boys took me up the hill, and I got my wife's keys, and, of course, that makes the car run. But before I started the car, there in the evening, I thought, Oh, dear Lord, I wish so much I could find those keys. They can't be very far for I haven't been very far since I drove the car in here.

So I knelt down there on the blacktop and prayed and got up and started to look again. Now, some of you are listening to hear that I found the keys, but I didn't—I didn't find the keys at all. So, finally, nothing to do but get in the car with my wife's keys, and I went on up.

Well, you know, up there the road from the sanitarium up into the hollow—part of it's paved, and part of it's a dirt road. And I was nearing the end of the pavement and about to get on the dirt road, and I heard something [Elder Frazee drops something] down on the blacktop, and I'm sure the Lord impressed me, "You better back up. That might be your keys."

So I backed up, and there on the blacktop [Elder Frazee holds up his keys] these very keys, by the way. Now, how did they get there? Well, I'd give a nickel to know, but they dropped off the car some way. Best I can figure out, when I was getting in the car the first time to come home, some visitor had walked across the parking lot, and I had gone back to talk to them. And somebody else was there in the parking lot, and I talked to them and reached in my car to get some sanctuary material to give them, and somewhere in all that talking, I must have laid the keys down on the car—foolish thing to do, I'm sure, but at least that's the best I can figure out.

My point is, the dear Lord just impressed my heart as I drove along after I'd put the keys in my pocket and still driving along with my wife's keys, as if Jesus would say to me, Yes, I hear your prayers. I heard you down there in the parking lot. I always hear you. But I reserve to myself when I answer, and how I answer, what method I use, and that's all right.

Now, you know, a number of times since that, as I either walk or drive by that place there on the road, what do you suppose I think of? I think, Oh, there's where I found the keys. There's where the dear Lord helped me. Here I raise my Ebenezer—stone of help. Do you see what I mean, friends?

Now, that particular thing never happened to me before, and I don't think it'll ever happen to me again, but all the while, God is doing some new, fresh, wonderful thing for us, sometimes in answer to prayer and, as I say, sometimes when we don't know enough to pray about something. Tell me, has God done anything for you? Well, raise an Ebenezer. Make a note of it; mark it on the calendar.

And I'll tell you another if you don't like to write, if you don't like to even make a mark. Just start telling somebody else, and by the time you've told 10 people, you won't forget it for quite a while. If you use it, you won't lose it, but if you don't use it, you will lose it. That's right. It's the thing that we repeat. All right.

So, we're to look back and remember all the wonderful things God has done for us. Deuteronomy 8, verse 2:

“And thou shalt...” Deuteronomy 8:2.

What?

“...remember...” Deuteronomy 8:2.

Is there one of the commandments that begins with that word? What is it? The Fourth Commandment. You know, the Sabbath is an Ebenezer. It's a memorial. It reminds us that God made the world. Is that important to us? That's how we happen to be here, isn't it? He gave us life, and the Sabbath is a memorial of God's creative power.

Well, we're not only to remember that. This is a personal matter.

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led *thee* these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no”
Deuteronomy 8:2.

Remember all the way the Lord has led you. Well, for Israel at that time, how long was it? Forty years. Well, Dona, it hasn't been that long for you yet, has it? No. Dona can't remember 40 years back. But, whatever the length of our journey so far, we're to remember *all* the way the Lord has led us.

You know, it's a wonderful thing to think back over your life and see how God has led. Of course, I know there are some things we can't see—I mean, we can't explain—we don't understand—but we know God *has* led us, and we can look forward to His explanations in the future.

But, there are many things in our lives we can see the leading of the Lord, can't we? Why, yes. How do we happen to be here in this house of worship this morning?

Why, do you know, there is a chain of providences in every life that leads from way back on to this very morning—golden links in the chain of providence. Let's review them in our minds, let's review them in our minds.

This might be a suggestion for some of you tonight as you have worship in your homes at the close of the Sabbath. Why don't you, instead of having a scripture reading tonight—why don't you just go back over your experience and pick out some things that God has done in your lives. Try that and see the blessing that comes. "Remember all the way that the Lord Thy God hath led Thee."

All right. Now, there's another faculty of the mind that I'd like to have us notice this morning. This first one deals with memory. We remember the things that are in the past, and we put up these Ebenezers to help us remember, and that's looking *back*. All right.

Now, God also wants us to use the powers of our mind to look around us as we journey. We call these the powers of observation. We're to look around us and see what's happening. Psalm 107, verse 43, Psalm 107, verse 43. What's the sixth word? Observe. That's right.

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" Psalm 107:43.

Now, turn to Proverbs, the 20th chapter, and I want you to notice two things that we can use to observe. Proverbs 20, verse 12. What two things do you see here? The ear and the eye. But what kind of an ear? A hearing ear. What kind of an eye? A seeing eye.

Jesus said to His disciples:

"...blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear"
Matthew 13:16.

Were there a great many people when Christ was here that didn't recognize Him? They saw a man walking along, but they didn't see Him for what He was. They heard Him speak, but they didn't get the message. Oh, for a seeing eye. Oh, for a hearing ear.

Every year in our training work, we try to help our students to get acquainted with nature—those that aren't already acquainted. You know, it's very interesting to take people out for a walk in nature and note the difference in their powers of observation.

An unspoiled child, a natural child, when he gets out in nature, it's interesting to see how his open mind sees so many things. Parents, you watch with your children as you take them out in nature how they'll see that toad, this butterfly, that flower, this bird, and that and that and that. The seeing eye, the listening ear—the Lord hath made even both of them.

I want to read you a little poem about one of the saddest things in the world. It's about people that have once had powers of observation and then lost them through not using it.

God pity eyes that have not seen the dawn,
Twilight, or shadow, or wind-blown tree,
But pity more the eyes that look upon,
All loveliness, and yet can never see;

God pity ears that have not caught the notes
Of wind or wave, of violin or bird,
But pity more that, daily, music floats
To ears that hear and yet have never heard.

God pity hearts that have not known the gift
Of love requited, comfort and caress,
But, O God, pity more the hearts that drift
From love's high moment to forgetfulness.

This is the tragedy of common sense:
To dim all wonder by indifference.
By Helen Frazee-Bower

Oh, husbands and wives, don't lose the wonder and the mystery of love. Parents and children, don't lose the wonder and the mystery of love—love in the home, love in heart. All around us are wonderful experiences—in nature, in our daily contacts with one another. And what did our text in Psalm say?

"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord" Psalm 107:43.

But we must watch for things. A butterfly doesn't come stamping through the woods like an elephant or a caterpillar. A little flower by the wayside doesn't shout as we pass, Look at me. Look at me. And there are sweet and precious experiences that God is offering us every day. We must watch for them. Oh, for powers of observation. What do you say? All right.

Then, we're going to use our memory as we look back, we're going to use our powers of observation as we look around. Now, turn to Romans, the eighth chapter, and we're going to see another way to look—that's look ahead. Don't you like to look ahead? Yes.

Here we have powers of anticipation. And, really, all the past is the prelude to the future. Romans, the 8th chapter, verses 24 and 25:

"For we are saved by..." Romans 8:24.

What?

"...hope..." Romans 8:24.

And hope deals with what? The future.

“...but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it” Romans 8:24–25.

Do you ever when you’re driving along a road, wonder what’s over the hill, what’s around the corner? So it is with life. What’s going to happen tomorrow? What’s going to happen next week? Oh, I think I know. Are you sure? Well, no, I’m not sure, but I hope this is going to happen. I hope this or that is going to happen. And hope’s a wonderful gift, my friends. Of all the creatures God has created in this world, man has the greatest gift of looking ahead, and we can cultivate that gift.

And in the Bible, God has given us precious views of the future. That’s what prophecy’s for. As we study the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, we can see how God has foretold the future down through the years, and so as we look through the prophetic telescope and focus it on the road ahead, we can say, Oh, I can see. I can see this and that. There’s much, of course, we can’t see, but oh, there’s so much to see.

So we look back in memory, we look around in observation, we look forward in vision and in anticipation, and we hope for the wonderful things that God has promised.

Now, there’s another way that’s good to look, and that’s right up, right up. Turn to Luke, the 21st chapter. Luke 21. This generation in which you and I live has been given a special commission to look up. God knew that the outlook around us wouldn’t be very encouraging. He knew that people would spend all their time looking at the troubles in the world, would get heart failure—that’s in the 26th verse, Luke 21—but the 28th verse has the point I want to get right now.

“And when these things...” Luke 21:28.

These troubles in the world.

“...begin to come to pass, then...” Luke 21:28.

What”

“...look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” Luke 21:28.

Do you know what it takes to look up and see what Jesus is talking about here? It takes imagination. You look up here, and if all you can see is what you see with these eyes, you see a few miles at best. You may see some jetliner up there seven, eight miles in the sky. You might even at night see some stars that are several trillion miles away. But oh, if we’ll use our imagination—and this is what God has given us imagination for—we can see so many things.

Look at Revelation 11:19. You'll see what I mean, Revelation 11:19. John, looking down to the end of the 2,300 days in 1844—he saw a door opened in Heaven, and he saw an object brought to view. What was it? The Ark of His testament.

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the Ark of his testament...”
Revelation 11:19.

Do you know who saw it? The people of God right down here in this world. God opened Heaven to the vision of our early advent pioneers in 1844 and five and six and seven. Step by step, the Lord led them into a clear view of what was going on in the Most Holy Place and the cleansing of the sanctuary.

And now, day by day, you and I can gather, and as on our knees we search the Word—don't miss this point—in our imagination we can see Jesus standing there at the mercy seat holding up His wounded hands for us. We can see that ark, we can see in the Ark, in our imagination. We can see the Ten Commandments, the holy law of God, written with His own finger. We can trace down those commandments, one, two, three, four, and so on. We can review those wonderful precepts which Jesus wrote on the stone with His finger and is writing on our hearts today.

All this in our imagination. You know, so much in this book of Revelation—it takes imagination to get the picture. Look at the last two chapters—Revelation 21 and 22. What's the subject about in Revelation 21 and 22? The New Jerusalem. Where is it going to be someday? Right on this earth. We can look ahead and see that.

But where is it now, or is it now? Is it somewhere now? Where is it? It's in Heaven. Is it a real city? Yes. How big is it? Three hundred and seventy-five miles square. It would take a while to build a wall around that, wouldn't it, Brother Sayer? Yes. My, my. Longer than it would take to build a sanitarium up there, wouldn't it? Just think of it—375 miles wide.

Now, it's amazing how many details are given us in Revelation 21 and 22 about this city. And where is it now? It's in Heaven. Jesus says, “Look up, look up,” and then in our imagination, we begin to picture that river of water of life, the tree of life growing on either side. How often does it have some new fruit? A different kind every month.

Now, let me show you how the imagination works. As I imagine that, you know what I see? I see that, as we come up there every new moon (that means every month) besides coming every week, there's going to be what hanging on that tree? Some new fruit that wasn't there last month. I mean, it wasn't ripe last month.

But you know what I'm going to be looking for? Some of the fruit that was still on there from last month and the month before. This is my imagination, you understand, but I like to think of that.

I suppose I'd gotten into thinking about that when I was a boy in California. We had a tree that somebody had grafted, and all on one tree, it had oranges and lemons and tangerines, all on one tree. And that citrus fruit, you know, if it hangs on the tree weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks, it gets so sweet—just full of sugar.

Well, you see how my imagination's working on that tree of life. Now, that's all right. I have another imagination. I like watermelons, but there's one thing I don't care too much, and it's the rind, and another one is all those seeds you have to, you know, put aside all the time.

And a few years ago, Brother Cooper gave me a little watermelon about this big. I think he called it an icebox melon. Have you seen them? Little round thing—just as round as a cannonball. That was nice. Of course, it still had rind and seeds. But I got to thinking about it, and I decided that on my little farm in the earth made new—oh, I'm not going to have 600 acres, but I am going to have a garden, and quite a bit of my space, I want a little lake with a waterfall tumbling in it—I'm great on scenery—but I would like a melon patch and some watermelons.

And, listen, when you come to see me, I'm going to give you a watermelon that you can eat like an apple, the whole thing, rind and all. And it'll be the right size to hold, of course, your hands will be bigger then so the melon will be just the right size to hold like a great big apple—eat the whole thing. Isn't that nice?

Now, that's imagination, isn't it, see, but it's harmless.

“...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Notice this in the book *Steps to Christ*, page 86:

“Let your imagination picture the home of the saved, and remember that it will be more glorious than your brightest imagination can portray” *Steps to Christ*, page 86.

So look up and think of that beautiful city. Jesus has gone to prepare it for you. Oh, some of you aren't interested in watermelons. You might be interested in music. Okay. Imagine the music of Heaven, the instruments, the choir. Some of you may be interested in travel. All right. Imagine the trips that your travel guide is going to work out for you up there all through Orion, here, there and yonder through the universe, exploring the different nebulae and galaxies, and so on, friends. Something there to satisfy every longing; something there to interest every mind; something there to satisfy every heart.

Well, we can look back and remember what God has done for us. We can look around us and observe all He's doing now in the beautiful things of nature and in our lives. We can look forward and think of the things that God is going to do for us tomorrow, next week, and finally, the coming of Jesus. And we can look up now, by faith in our imagination, and see Jesus standing for us there presenting His blood as the atonement for our sins. And then by faith, also, as we look up, we see that jasper city, the golden streets, the river of life, the tree of life. Say, folks, there is enough to keep our eyes busy literally and symbolically all the time. What do you say? What do you say?

You know, I've thought of it sometimes. If somebody would give me an expensive camera—spend two, three, four, \$500 giving me an expensive camera, and then furnish me some lovely color film to go with it, what would you think of me if you'd watch me going around the area hunting for garbage pile, dead cat, briar patches, and just snapping pictures here, there and yonder? What would you think? Wouldn't it be a pity, friends?

Ah, there are such around. You know it? And remember, whatever you look at, you get a picture. A man could burn up the film that he wanted to get rid of, but what goes in through these eyes and through these ears is there forever. The only way to get rid of that is to burn it up. We can have it burnt out by the cleansing fires of the work of Jesus, or else we'll have to be burnt up *with* it in the fires of the last days.

I'm so glad that now we can be filling our minds with things that are worth remembering all through eternity. What do you say?

Now, are we going to remember that word? What was that word we started with this morning? Ebenezer. And it means what? A stone of help.

Here I raise my Ebenezer, Hither by Thy help I've come.

Yes, every time we praise God, Ebenezers...

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